WAYFARING

Place and Painting in the Tropical Far North

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Abstract

Walking and painting are investigated in this research to establish a connection with the previously unfamiliar environment of tropical Far North Queensland. This practice-led research project reveals how walking mindfully in nature, and embodied bodily knowledge, can inform works of art.

The research is influenced by anthropologist Tim Ingold's (2011) notion that life is a process of *wayfaring* where we experience the world in terms of movement along a meshwork of trails. Ingold's writing instigated a fundamental shift in my understanding of place. At the beginning of the project I imagined place as a contained or fixed location, however I came to understand place as a sensuous internal/external experience developed over time and along continuous pathways. As a result of engaging with the phenomenology of walking in the natural tropical terrain, I developed a methodology of *wayfaring-painting*. This new mode of imaginative wayfaring onto the canvas became both a specific mode of creative practice and a means for expressing a wayfaring philosophy in material form on individual canvases and in also the composition and arrangement of the final *Wayfaring* exhibition. This approach to place-making offers a vision of the tropical landscape that emphasises the significance of the lived experience of contemporary life in the Far North.

A central question guides this practice-led research project: *How can a body of contemporary visual art evoke the experience of wayfaring in the tropical Far North?* Progressive findings are shown in staging exhibitions, culminating in *Wayfaring,* in which the works of art evoke my phenomenological experience of walking on forest paths and stretches of beach in the Far North. These are the places I've come to know as 'home'. Viewers are invited to take their own wandering journey through the abstracted painted landscapes, which aim to evoke new understandings of the tropical environment and, perhaps, illuminate their own experiences of wayfaring in the world. Wayfaring-painting involves manifesting this sensuous contact in painting. This combination led to new imaginative terrains, revealing deeper understandings of place, self and belonging.

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Prologue

I grew up in northern New South Wales. My childhood home was located in a rural area on the outskirts of town, at the bottom of a hill and at the end of a gravel road. I spent most of my childhood outdoors, adventuring with my best friend who lived across the street, in the only other house at the base of the hill. For years, after school, on weekends and holidays, we would play and explore the surrounding fences, rocks and trees, making up games in the dry paddocks. Our only rule was that I had to wait until 8 a.m. until I could knock on her door and the same rule held for her. Occasionally, we would walk to the very back of our paddocks: hers had a creek with a waterfall and eels, and mine had a stump with a cow's skull. It was a big thing to head out to the end of these paddocks (often we had to be accompanied by our older brothers and would take snacks), but in hindsight it was not so far. Certain memories remain sharp and are deeply imbedded. For instance, I can remember the sensation of a warm squelch of fresh cowpat through my sandals. Similarly, the sound of wind blowing through tall dry grass transports me back to those golden afternoons. I understand this landscape, it is familiar and deep-rooted, and a part of who I am. Strangely, I also feel that it knows me.

Seven years ago, I moved to tropical North Queensland. Thick humid air greeted me as I alighted the plane in Cairns. 'I need to get changed' was probably my first thought and has become the opening line uttered by many friends during subsequent airport arrivals. Viewed from an air-conditioned car, the ridgeline hugged with greenery and the particularly bright light and dark shadows made an immediate impression. I found the tropical landscape different and dramatic. Within a week I found myself taping windowpanes and evacuating to higher ground, as tropical cyclone Yasi approached. Unlucky timing, perhaps, but certainly my transition into the tropical Far North was not a confidence building experience. The environment seemed beautiful but unpredictable, at least to me. I did not know this landscape. Nor did I know how to inhabit it.

Introduction-Wayfaring: Painting and Place in the Tropical North

This exegesis tells the story of my transition from a sense of disconnection in a tropical location to an understanding of emplacement developed through walking and painting. The problem of place that initiated this research is investigated through practice-led research methodology. This dynamic research method facilitates a 'coming-to-know' the tropical environment. Praxis informed by theories of art and phenomenology, that draws from precedents of practice in the field of art, walking and painting coalesce here as I describe a project that involved failing, trying again and finally finding ways to express my lived experience in paint. The result is a lived sense of emplacement, a body of artwork, and a wayfaring-painting methodology.

The 'Far North' of Australia is situated in the tropics.[1] My relocation to the Cairns environment was initially a confronting experience: not only was it hot and humid, it was void of personal connections and memories. The tropics pushed me out of my comfort zone in many ways, demanding a reconsideration of my established place-based creative practice approaches.

Wayfaring is defined as travelling on foot (New Oxford American Dictionary 2010). However, in this research wayfaring is applied as a phenomenological approach to exploring and understanding place in terms of embodied pedestrian movement. My use of the term is derived from the work of anthropologist Tim Ingold (2000), who suggests that 'lives are not led inside places but through, around, to and from them, from and to places elsewhere' (p.229). In this way, life is perceived via movement and in the forging and following of paths: 'along such paths lives are lived, skills developed, observations made and understandings grown' (Ingold 2011, p.12). Ingold's ideas led me to seek embodied knowledge through walking paths, where I paid attention to, observed and felt the sensuous qualities of place.

My phenomenological application of wayfaring in far north Queensland endeavours to be mindful and respectful towards the traditional indigenous owners of the land, who have a prior and enduring spiritual connection that is different to my own (AITSIS 2018). While I am in pursuit of a personal

1 'The tropics is the hottest region on the earth, located between the tropic of Cancer in the north and Tropic of Capricorn in the south. There are typically two seasons, wet and dry, and two landscape types, the wet tropics and the dry' (Wilson 1998, p.175). This research primarily explores the wet tropical landscapes of Cairns and surrounding region in northern Queensland, a map scope is shown in the appendix. See AIATSIS (2018) for a map of Indigenous territories that indicates levels of complexity around issues of sovereignty and colonialism that this research project does not take on. That said, this research only becomes possible if I first acknowledge the Indigenous tribal/language groups of Djabuganjdji, Yidinjdji, Djirbalngan and Warganaygau that have sovereignty and ownership of the land that this research relates to (AIATSIS 2018).

and meaningful connection with the land and emplacement in the tropics, my wayfaring approach encourages ethics and connections that do not seek to displace or make claim regarding land. Indeed, I would argue that my methods of immersive and multi-sensuous mindfully moving through the landscape aims to draw out creative work from a personal, authentic and embodied experience of place that does not enact a displacement of Indigenous values and rights.

Through this bodily-based strategy of place-making, I would suggest that the results depart from Orientalist modes of exoticism and adventure, or other forms of representational violence undertaken in the process of settler-colonialism. A western Orientalist lens may approach the tropical environment with a sense of superiority, involving pre-meditated imaginings of fantasies and beauty—and unmitigated availability for the pleasure and enjoyment of the viewer. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1979) states that the 'universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space which is 'theirs' is a way of making geographical distinctions' (p.54). However, this research was never in pursuit of constructing the tropics as an exotic realm, to romanticise, tame or align a sense of emplacement with that of ownership. My wayfaring methodology positioned my creative practice to produce differently mediated work that explicitly moves beyond tropical stereotypes and explores the direct phenomena of moving through the landscape on foot. This Ingoldian and phenomenologically based approach to place-making means that I have not necessarily engaged with indigenous worldviews and I acknowledge this with deep respect for the traditional owners of land that this research relates to, and draws from.

The relationship between the landscape, walking and art has long been investigated by artists in Australia especially since the 1960s (Morrison-Bell et al. 2013). However, almost the entire walking-arts genre has occurred in the temperate climates (ibid.). By contrast, this research has investigated wayfaring in the wet tropics and the particular physical demands and rewards of this terrain as it allows for the contribution of original research to this field.

I consider and apply the notion of wayfaring as practice. As the research progressed, a phenomenological method of wayfaring-painting developed as a layered and multifaceted activity. This method and the works of art produced as research have addressed the central research question: *How can a body of contemporary visual art evoke the experience of wayfaring in the tropical Far North?* In investigating this question, the following sub-questions have framed the research:

» How can a review of literature regarding of movement through a landscape contribute an understanding of emplacement in the wet tropics and influence the research scope? (Chapter One)

» In what way can walking as a research method contribute to mindful engagement with the natural environment and form a basis for painting practice? (Chapter Two)

» How can a review of phenomenological philosophy elucidate synergies that may arise between place, walking, body/mind and painting? (Chapter Three)

Two staging exhibitions were produced in response to these questions on route to the final body of work: *Interior/Exterior landscapes from the Far North* (2014); *Trilogy* (2015); and then *Wayfaring* (2017). These staging exhibitions are utilised in this exegesis to discuss the research progression and relevant literature in each of these three phases. In this way, the staging exhibitions have provided a means by which the dynamic and often messy nature of practice-led research can be revealed (Berry and Batty 2015).

Irrespective of the framework of exhibition 'phases', the path of research has been complex and winding. The trail for me, often appeared an uphill trudge, with exposed roots to trip over that often slowed me to a complete halt, my head swivelling as I lost direction wondering which way to go. At other times, I gained unexpected momentum, and in these deeply meaningful moments when painting and walking informed each other, the long struggle became more than worthwhile.

The shape of a walk

This exegesis takes the form of a walk, which is analogous to the winding configuration of the research journey. The chosen walk is specifically what would constitute a day hike in the Far North; there is planning, then the outset, leading to immersion within the environment and, finally, the finish. I describe these stages throughout the document with the reference to the developing research and with the suggestion of the deep synergies that this project shares with walking in the natural tropical landscape.

Planning:

Chapter One investigates place-based theory, which situates the beginning stages of this research. I question the stereotypical palm fringed beach views that are frequently used in tourist marketing media to depict life in the tropics. The writings of the philosopher of place, Edward Casey, are formative in shifting my place-making approach from car travel to the more specific scope of bipedal movement. The research and first staging exhibition represent significant phases in both the physical geographical explorations and in art-making practice, and also provide a framework and direction for a deeper consideration of place-making in the arts.

The Outset:

Pedestrianism is the focus of Chapter Two in which I explore the specific role played by walking in the tropical terrain in coming-to-know place. The impact on creative practice of walking at a slower pace and walking mindfully in the natural environment are described in this chapter. As walking methods and theory become pivotal in shaping how I relate to the tropics, the cadence and composition of my painting transform. Such changes are made visible in the works of art in the exhibition *Trilogy*.

Immersion:

A review of the literature on phenomenology informs the developments discussed in Chapter Three. In this chapter, several threads of influences are drawn together including the philosophies of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's embodied perception, Casey's body-mapping, Ingold's work on lines and Arthur Danto's theory of embodied meaning. A synthesis of these ideas has enabled me to structure the methodology as an interwoven embodied experience of wayfaring-painting. The information presented in this chapter goes towards the decisive resolution of the works of art presented in the final *Wayfaring* exhibition.

Finishing:

In the final chapter I detail my aims for the final exhibition and highlight the extent to which the painting practice has transitioned in this journey. I reflect on how a once strange and unknown tropical environment now holds a feeling of home. The chapter discusses new understandings of art making and insights into creative research. Parallels are drawn between the research process and a very long walk as explorations through both philosophical and creative practice terrains are undertaken.

The words of philosopher Frederic Gros (2011) are apt for leading into my story of becoming a wayfaring-painter:

> [During] very long walks, there is always that emergence through a high pass where another landscape appears all of a sudden. After the effort, the long climb, the body turns around and sees at its feet the offered immensity; or, at the turn of a path, it witnesses a transformation: a range of mountains, a splendour lying in wait. Many aphorisms are built on these reversals of perspective, these final exclamations where something else is unveiled, the secret discovery like a new landscape, and the jubilation that accompanies it (p.24).

This is the story of how I became a wayfaring-painter who feels deeply connected to the landscape in tropical North Queensland. It is also an account of why I paint, and how my practice is both a bodily and imaginative pursuit that illuminates past and future experience of place and belonging.

Stage 1: Planning

The planning stage of my walk usually begins with a word of mouth recommendation or by following a selection made after flicking through my small tattered copy of Dungey & Whytlaw's (2007) 'Tropical Walking Tracks' guidebook. I pack according to the information gathered about location, access, terrain, weather, distance and difficulty, filling my backpack with essentials such as insect repellent, hat, first aid, a change of shirt and of course, water. If there is a peak to reach, I include celebratory snacks to enjoy while admiring the view. I consider the time of day for the walk and usually set out in the early morning to avoid the tropical heat. During summer months, knowledge of a waterhole along the way brings the promise of a cool water swim. I feel excited about the adventure when, finally, I set out with my prepared backpack and a memory-image of a dotted map. If the walk is a new route, I feel a tinge of uncertainty about what lies ahead and so keep a physically tangible map on hand, just in case.

Chapter One: Finding Place in the Tropics

> [P]laces... are like knots, and the threads from which they are tied are lines of wayfaring.[2]

In this chapter I recount the first phase of the research, which focused on place-making, movement and time. These ideas, in relation to my early pursuit for emplacement, are reflected in the resulting body of work exhibited in the first staging exhibition of this research, titled *Interior/Exterior: Landscapes from the Far North*.

Place and place-making

> At a time when the multiple alienations of modern society threaten our sense of belonging, the importance of 'place' to creative possibility in life and art cannot be underestimated.[3]

Robson and Evans's recognition of the importance of *place* goes to heart of this project. Place is a concept that many recognise as profoundly significant to one's belonging in the world. As *place* is such a fundamental aspect of life it can be difficult to define clearly (Larsen and Johnson 2012). Historical developments of the concept can be traced back to Greek philosophy. Aristotle argued that place, understood as the place in which we live in and are contained by, is the grounds for existence (Cresswell 2015). The notion of grounds of existence resonates with my experience and is extended by the phenomenological philosophers and cultural geographers I have drawn from in this research. Both

2 Ingold 2011, p.149

3 Robson and Evans eds. 2010, pp. front cover.

these sources present an ontological perspective of place that is not considered as a mere location, but entail a philosophical position and way of being-in-the-world (Moran 2000; Hubbard and Kitchin 2011).

Place is an extensively considered and theorised concept, applicable to contexts for examining the dynamics of contemporary life, such the increasing mobility of family members for work, or forced resettlement, or the impact of the increasingly technological and digitally mediated aspects of daily life. The phenomenological philosopher of place, Edward Casey (2013), suggests that the abundant spread of electronic technology that connects people and places globally has not produced a positive 'global village', but rather a 'placeless place' (p.xiii). Casey argues that in fact these forces have contributed to a revitalisation of interest in the concept and a return by many to insist on the significance of place in our lives (ibid.)[4]. My motivations for this research relate to the particular historical moment that Casey identifies.

Even with a shared subject, various disciplines theorise place differently. Geographer Tim Creswell (2015) argues that place is a universal concept because humans have a shared capacity to form relationships with places. On the other hand, Casey (2013) argues that place is not universal, but it remains an 'ambiguous phenomenon', both in theory *and* geography, because place in both these senses has indeterminate boundaries (p.276). The profoundly subjective nature of place has been reported by cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) who advocates that only when a location becomes deeply familiar and invested with meaning that it becomes a place. Dean and Millar (2005) point out that a valued location with emotional attachment for one person can be a void space to another. These viewpoints suggest that while place may be comprehended as the overarching concept, we can never fully understand a particular places value to others due to the necessarily individualised, intrinsic and cultural dimensions of these relationships.

As I am a non-Indigenous person exploring the Australian landscape, it is important to recognise that Aboriginal people have a highly specific relationship to place (Rose 2008). Aboriginal connections to Country are particular as Indigenous journalist Catherine Liddle (2015) notes: 'Connection to country is inherent, we are born to it, it is how we identify ourselves, it is our family, our laws, our responsibility, our inheritance and our legacy'. Writing from a white anthropological perspective, Deborah Bird Rose (2008) points to this specific way of knowing and relating to place by observing Aboriginal Australian, Jessie[5] walking in her country: '[There is] no distinction between history and pre-history for Jessie: in her country, the present rolled into the past on waves of generations of living beings who had all worked to keep the place alive... She walked in knowledge, in communication, in

4 Ideas of technology and digital distraction are addressed in Chapter Two.

5 Jessie is a member of the Karangpuru people whose homeland is around the junction of the Victoria and Wickham rivers in the Northern Territory of Australia (Bird 2008, p.118).

memory and in story' (p.118-122). This is a poignant example of why we should be wary of assuming the possibility of a universal concept of place.

In this research, instead of theorising place as an abstract concept, I focus on practices and processes of *place-making*. Place-making, as I use the term, entails a process of becoming familiar with a location or environment. A focus on place-making leads me to attend to the quality of the connections formed with specific locations and the ways that I come to deeply care about or live in a place (Wyckoff 2014). As I will argue, art practice can enrich the process of place-making, enabling a multi-sensuous and layered familiarisation with a location over time. This approach demonstrates that there are appropriate reasons why one's connection to place is often referred to as a *sense* of place.

Many creative practitioners employ art as an investigation of place and place-making, providing a means of comprehending, thinking, feeling and knowing a region for themselves and the people who view their work. Ann Schilo (2016) writes that art can bring attention to the effects landscape has upon us. She argues that through art we can 'engage in a kind of conscious apperception of space as it unfolds in a particular place' (ibid., p.29). This is to say that the physical process of making art aids in place-making; it provides a visual representative and abstracted form to explore the complexities of place. An example of this approach to place is offered by artist-researcher Amanda Thomson (2013) who describes place-making as a process of 'coming-to-know' a landscape. The artist shows many ways that this can be accomplished through creative practice. Thomson shadows others, such as scientists and field workers, as they move and work in the landscape, interpreting these experiences and information through creative processes such as drawing. She is concerned with a 'more-than-textual' representation of place and how repeated visits and various forms of knowledge can influence, inform and deepen her understanding of place (ibid.).

Coming-to-know place

Like many before me, I have developed a mode of coming-to-know place through the arts. Art-making has enabled me to develop connections and relationships with the tropical Far North, replacing the unfamiliar with a new-found sense of place. The experience of relocation challenged me to look closely, both outwardly and inwardly, to find ways to express my experience and to replace my feeling of being out-of-place with a sense of belonging.

My initial exploration of my feelings of disconnection commenced with reflections on what it means to become 'uprooted'. Robert Coles (1971) explains that it is in our nature to grow roots in a place in which we belong, and that a change from a known, rooted environment results in a disturbance to a sense of belonging. As I began my research, this gardening metaphor was obvious and appealing. Re-potting a plant shocks the plant, however, if it is nurtured in a compatible environment and watered

regularly, the initial shock of being replanted may be overcome; if new roots develop the plant may thrive in the new environment.

Simryn Gill is a prominent example of a contemporary artist who masters plant metaphors with a poetic sensitivity, exploring her own personal growth, adaption and sense of unfamiliarity (Gill and Zegher 2013). Upon arriving to Adelaide, Australia, Gill describes her 'initial desire to make things familiar with both her and her plants struggling to make a connection with their new 'remote' environment, in a country where the concept of a 'native' garden had only recently taken root' (Kelly 2013, p.9). In works such as *Forest* (Figure 1), gardening metaphors are extended beyond the predictable, as sections of books/narratives/texts are grafted into plant life, and paperbacks are taken back to their 'roots' (Art Gallery NSW 2017). While layers of allusions are built into *Forest* relating to culture, literature and time, the notion of transplanted narratives has specific resonance with my journey and experience of being uprooted.

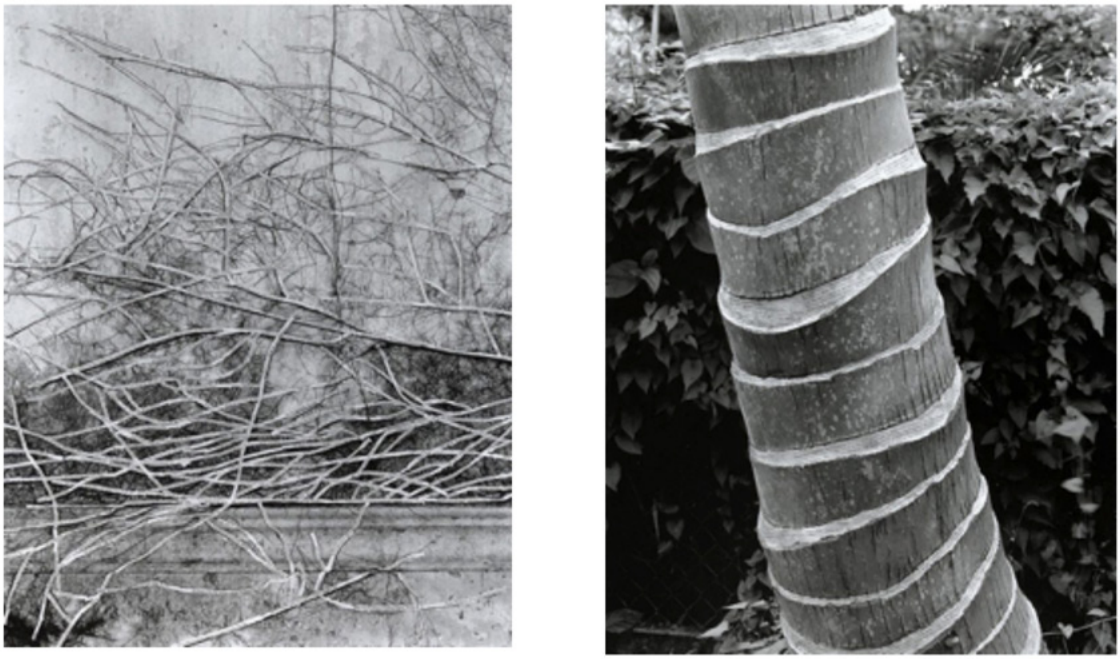

Figure 1. Simryn Gill, 1996-1998, *Forest* (details), photographs, 16 photographs 120 x 95cm each

The fact that I knew I was to reside in Cairns long-term contributed to my feeling of being uprooted. I had previously visited, and lived short-term, in several locations beyond my hometown, but the knowledge of a long-term move prompted feelings of upheaval. The notion of being uprooted is less extreme than that of being 'displaced', which refers to the forcible removal or change from a familiar place that can result in severe emotional impact (Relph 2016). By choice, I had been uprooted and 're-planted' in what seemed an incompatible environment, albeit a beautiful one.

As I turned to creative research as a mode to grow 'roots', I found that this relatable metaphor of

seeking to be grounded, or firmly fixed in a specific location, to become limiting, if not philosophically problematic. I began to visualise my 'rootedness' more like Céleste Boursier-Mougenot's kinetic trees (Figure 2) with exposed roots, *moving* around the gallery space and venturing outdoors. Yet as I developed a phenomenological approach to the question of place-making, I became increasingly concerned with embodied perception and *movement*, eventually embracing my project as 'an affair of the whole-body sensing and moving' (Casey 1996, pp.18). Therefore, instead of seeking to grow roots that reached down to anchor me into the earth, I sought to connect to place by moving along paths that intertwined the physical and imaginative. I did this by developing an applied walking method.

Figure 2. Céleste Boursier-Mougenot, 2015, *Revolutions* (Venice Bienale installation), kinetic forest installation, size variable

Place-making: Creative practice, time and movement

Before turning to explain the development of my applied walking and painting method as a mode of place-making, it is necessary to describe my initial approach to emplacement in the tropics. This approach developed along with a review of artists who have visited, resided or currently paint in the Far North Queensland region.

Beyond tropical stereotypes

Ross Searle (1991) argues that artists from the 'north' provide an important contribution to national identity that is very often biased to southern artists. Southern gumtrees are depicted with greater frequency in the tradition of Australian landscape art than plants from the tropics. Searle suggests that tropical artists can help to restore a balance to the national identity by producing a novel image of Far North Queensland (ibid.).

From the outset, I knew I wanted my creative contribution to explore the tropics in ways that went

beyond the stereotypical view of the region. The Cairns region is commonly represented in the media by picture-perfect postcard images depicting palm-rimmed beaches with highly saturated blue seas. These are made to deliberately entice tourists to the destination. Indeed, such images had shaped my own expectations of the environment from afar and since living in Cairns, I found that it is relatively easy to photographically capture an idyllic view (see Figures 3 and 4). However, such breathtaking beauty neither reflected, nor conveyed my actual experience of these places. The beauty of tropical landscapes is often coupled with extreme thirty-two-degree heat. In these places lingering for too long outdoors, even in the shade, is unpleasant. As I consciously turned away from a "postcard" representation of landscape I attempted to reveal my lived experience of the tropics, replete with its grit, sweat, colour, heat and occasionally, overwhelming lushness. My concern became to reveal the perspective of an engaged participant affected by landscape over time, rather than what Gavin Wilson (1998) describes as a five-day transient tourist view of the Cairns region.

Figure 3. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014, *Research journal image, Fitzroy Island*, digital photograph

Figure 4. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014, *Research journal image, Palm Cove*, digital photograph

Another aspect of my attempts to develop an original approach to my subject matter entailed a departure from the historical western landscape-painting genre and a move towards abstraction. Western traditions of landscape painting often depict a view from a distance, with fore, middle and backgrounds resulting in work that privileges topographical information (Tilley 1994). However, in contemporary art practice, depictions of landscapes indicate an *interactive experience of landscape* and conceptual grounds (Malpas 2011, my emphasis). As I became familiar with the region, my confidence grew in revealing my interactive experience in the tropics in the form of painterly abstraction.

Other artists offer important precedents and a context to this project in terms of the effect of the tropics on painting practice and creative attempts to reveal an insider's perspective of landscape. Paul Gauguin is one such figure and my life in the tropics has led to a greater appreciation of his works. My experience in local landscape has led me to increase the colour saturation and create weighty shadow

in ways that seem Gauguin-esque. I now understand how much Gauguin's paintings capture the weight and feeling of humidity in the region along with the vibrancy of hue.

Sasha Grishin (2013) describes culturally esteemed Australian landscape artists as re-inventors of the landscape who explore the spiritual and physical, rather than producing a mimetic rendition of a place. Artist John Firth-Smith observed that a painting 'is not always the thing that's happening in the distance, it's the thing that's happening above you and below you and inside you as well' (cited in Wilson 1998, p.117). This quote indicates the artist's capacity to express both internal and external factors, which become embodied within the painterly surface and help explain why his compositions move into extremely abstracted terrain. The textural and abstract approach Firth-Smith has employed has been of significant interest for this research. Techniques of close observation, visiting various locations, reworking of paint surfaces, combined to produce depth and emotion, are visible in his paintings (Wilson 1998). *Through* (Figure 5) is textural and raw, making abstract reference to an islander's hut he may have encountered whilst visiting Far North Queensland. The contrast between light and shade and the gritty palette reflects a broader atmosphere and texture of the place explored with acute observation and tactile knowing.

Figure 5. John Firth-Smith, 1988, *Through,* oil on linen, 122 x 122 cm

In a contemporary context, Ian Smith's exhibition *Home Grown Images* (2017) depicts the Cairns landscape. Smith relocated south at age seventeen, however, his paintings are still heavily influenced by the colour and climate of the tropics. Stories of family, landscape and relationships convey the importance of his early life in Cairns. Mountainous ridgelines appear in various compositions as shown in *Across the Cairns Inlet* (Figure 6) to indicate how the topography is a memorable and dominant feature of the landscape. This motif has become a reoccurring aspect of my own paintings. Smith

employs figurative elements and draws from local architecture and childhood stories to develop his paintings, with the influence of the natural environment remaining ever present (Smith 2017). Smith's works of art with painterly viscosity present a palpable and personalised experience of place in the tropics.

Figure 6. Ian Smith, 2016, *Across the Cairns Inlet*, acrylic on canvas, 80 x 130cm

The artists noted above demonstrate an imaginative, persuasive and personalised perspective of the tropical landscape. Their work offers insights into a creatively constitutive dynamic between internal and external terrains, evoking both the physical landscape and their internal relationship with it.

Internal and external terrains

James Baker (1991) points to the dynamic process of internal and external interactions in art derived from the landscape. He writes that, 'Abstraction born of the landscape carries with it the same "messages" and can be a vital element in taking art *from the landscape* that next step into the landscape of the mind' and that, 'the artist who can use the landscape to reach into the human mind becomes philosopher and seer' (p.4, emphasis in original). Yet I question Baker's separation of the physical landscape and the internal landscape of the mind. In my paintings, reference to the actual physical terrain embodies an integrated experience of place. The landscape is explored as a basis to imaginatively contemplate or reflect wider notions, including selfhood, belonging and human/nature relationships[6]. As a result, accurate visual representations of landscape or static viewpoints are not paramount in the paintings made during this research. Through my painting, the distinction between the physical and mind presented by Baker became increasingly reduced and blurred in my place-

6 The influence and expression of my relationship with the natural terrain are addressed in Chapter Two.

making.

Ingold (2010) describes the relationship between interior and exterior 'landscapes' in terms that resonate with my experiences. He writes that, 'the terrains of the imagination and the physical environment, far from existing on distinct ontological levels, run into one another to the extent of being barely distinguishable' (p.15). The more time I spent actively coming into relationship with the environment, the less I experienced distinct divisions between body, mind, physical landscape, self and painting practice. Painting became a mode for me to grapple with, visualise and acknowledge the bodily feelings of being in the tropical environment.

Landscape, self and painting were elements in an ongoing and interdependent relationship that shaped my place-making and encompassed the internal/external dynamic of place that found form in the art produced in the first phase of my research.

Interior/Exterior: Landscapes from the Far North

The first staging show, *Interior/Exterior: Landscapes from the Far North*, exhibited at the Cairns Regional Gallery, is marked by what I now recognised as an outward-focused gaze and a generalised view of the landscape that included roads and industry. These works of art were created following information gathered whilst driving and reaching the summit of bush tracks. Though these works do not evidence what I would later identify as my wayfaring method, this exhibition enabled me to critically rethink my painting process and facilitated an important change in my painting practice.

The work of art *Three Winters* (Figures 7-9) that was positioned centrally in the gallery space is a useful exemplification of my early place-making practice. In both name and subject matter, the work acknowledged the inviting mild climate of the tropical dry season during the winter months (and so implicitly acknowledged the wet, humid, summer months that I found confronting and less easy to endure). The *Three Winters* installation was made up of ninety-two individual pieces with one for each day of 'winter'. The pieces were arranged in layers to represent the passing of time, suggesting a fleeting view through a car window. My intention was to express the accumulation of moments that build up over time and which can come to constitute an overall perception of place. The work displayed key aspects that were meaningful during my first three years of place-making in the tropics, including a fascination with local sugarcane industry and cane trains, repeat visits to particular coastal points and the signage and maps that guided the many 'Sunday drives' taken to acquaint myself with the new surroundings.

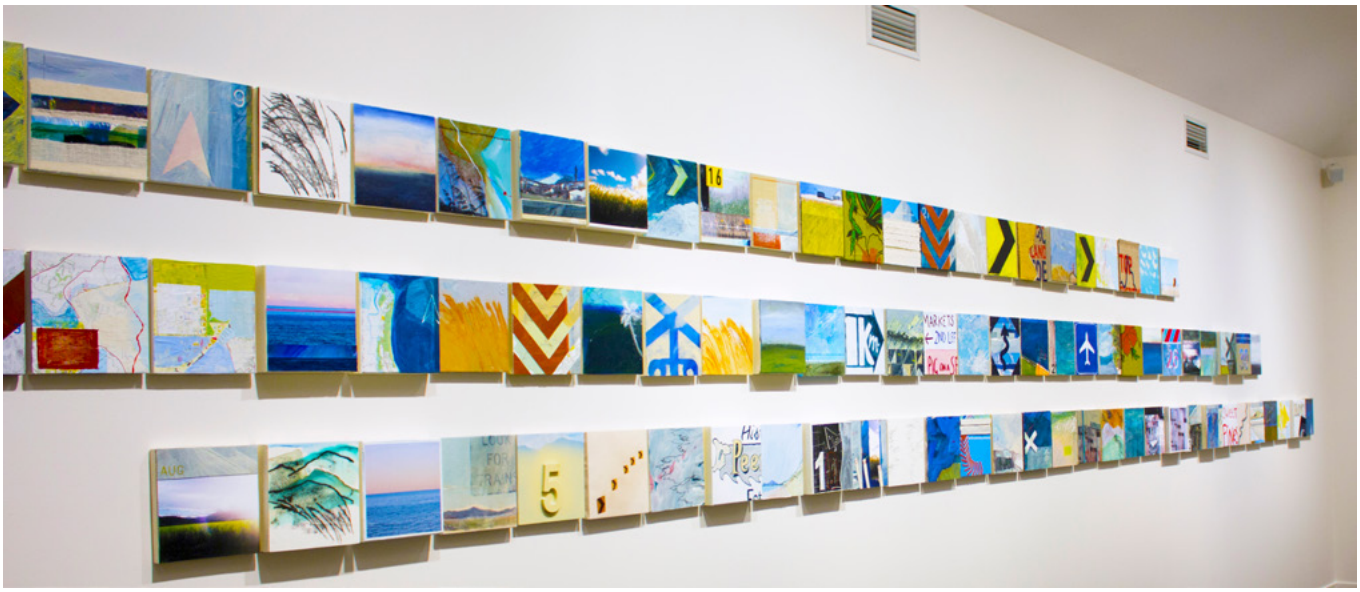

Figure 7. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014, *Three Winters* (exhibition view), mixed materials, 92 (22 x 22cm), overall installation approx. 250 x 950cm

Figure 8. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014, *Three Winters* (detail), mixed materials, 22 x 22cm

Figure 9. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014, *Three Winters* (detail), mixed materials, 22 x 22cm

Though this work is the product of car-based explorations, *Three Winters* evokes the interlinking dynamics of movement and time in a process of coming-to-know the environment that remained a central impetus of the entire research project. The work explores how driving through the landscape allows for an essential overview of my new home. It foregrounds an impression of the terrain derived through movement on regional roads. Making a series of smaller works that captured details of many experiences allowed for the artwork to build and unfold, resulting in an expression of both car-based movement *and* the passing of time.

The accumulation of fragments that make up *Three Winters* reflects something akin to Casey's (1996) philosophical concept that 'places gather'. It expresses my experience of the ways in which, as Casey writes, 'places gather experiences, histories, even languages and thoughts' (p.24). Or, as Tuan suggests, 'attachment(s) to place are a function of time' (in Schilo ed. 2016, p.85).

As I drove, painted and read Casey's phenomenological views on place-making, I gradually came to appreciate how my childhood adventures had developed a sense of place within me and, in turn, why I felt a void in the Far North. During the years of play at 'home', I had unreflexively accumulated experiences, memories and stories through which a sense of place had gathered. This helped, for instance, to realise that the seemingly unremarkable gravel hill out the front of my childhood home is far from nondescript. It is, rather, 'The Hill'. I walked up The Hill every school morning to the bus stop and back again in the afternoon. It is also where I had a bike accident on a rainy day that resulted in grazes from my forehead to shins. A scar on my knee is an ever-present reminder of this gravelly crash, while the smell of Dettol still takes me straight back to mandatory post-accident antiseptic bath treatments. When I revisit this childhood place, my body calls to mind countless stories involving The Hill in a variety of forms, further consolidating my sense of place and how places are interwoven with lived experience and actions (Seamon 1979). Casey's (1996) words, 'places gather' are pertinent.

Gathering

As Casey (1996) describes, places do not gather simply by amassment, but in a process involving people, interactions, the physical terrain, thoughts and memories. He argues that, 'the hold of a place, [is] its gathering action' (p.25). This notion is useful in clarifying the incremental ways that places 'get a hold' on someone. Such concepts are a reminder that place-making cannot be forced or instantaneous. Nonetheless, dedicating oneself to being sensuously receptive to one's environment can aid immeasurably in establishing a place-making practice.

One strategy that enabled me to cultivate an 'in' to place (shown in Figures 10 and 11) was a daily routine of beach visits [7]. The journaling and documentation of these everyday experiences provided a focused way to consider and compare my experiences over time, including my perceptions of colour, texture and relationships between them. The tropical climate imposed a regime that meant that I chose to use the cooler parts of the day to explore and paint, so I set out to understand the weather, routines and rhythms of my new environment through repeat visits to my local coastline during early mornings and evenings. Throughout the documentation of these daily visits, the water is often shown in its various tones of brown and navy rather than the cliché of tropical saturated, bright blue. Local people

7 Note that these photographs occurred prior to undertaking PhD research and were directly associated with an earlier exhibition *Timescapes* in 2012.

told me that the brown water in summer months often brings in the Irukandji[8] due to onshore winds. It was through this process of gathering information and taking images that my 'coming-to-know' the new environment was slowly formed.

Figure 10. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2011, *Timescapes* research images-Trinity Beach Mornings, digital photographs

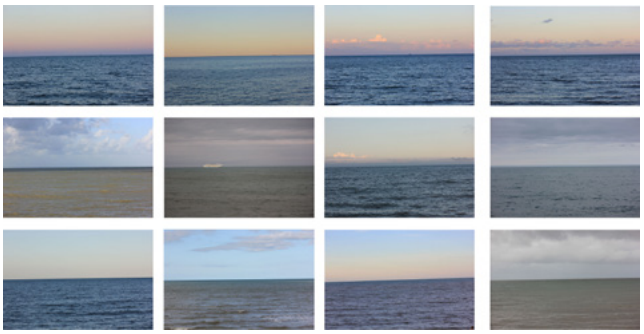

Figure 11. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2011, *Timescapes* research images- Trinity Beach Evenings, digital photographs

As the research progressed, gathering and journaling fragments of experience became central to my practice. I found helpful comparison in Gerhard Richter's ongoing work, *Atlas overview* (Figures 12 and 13). This monumental collection shows how Richter collects snippets over time in the form of photographs, resource images, colour, experiments and digital manipulations that relate to wide ranging fields including landscape and current events. This accumulative comparison process allows connections and ideas to reveal themselves. Richter describes his motivation for collecting as a desire to 'create order' and 'keep track of things' (Elger and Obrist 2009, p.350). In a similar way, organising my thoughts and experiences in the seemingly 'wild' tropical environment became an integral part of place-making and art-making. Journaling provided a way to consolidate and remember experiences in ways that were particularly important during the early stages of the research.

8 Irukandji is a tiny but highly venomous Australian jellyfish (Collins Dictionary 2017).

Figure 12. Gerhard Richter, 1962- ongoing, *Atlas overview* (installation detail, GoMA Brisbane 2017), mixed materials, sizes varied

Figure 13. Gerhard Richter, 1962- ongoing, *Atlas overview* (installation view, GoMA Brisbane 2017), mixed materials, sizes varied

Atlas conveys how one artist's practice is founded on enduring themes, inextricably linked to everyday life experiences. Reflecting on my own enduring themes, movement has been a proven mode in which I both understand and communicate my relationship with place in my art practice. Movement via car travel has been a specific reoccurring mode of place-making in my art going back to my adolescent work, such as *Lismore to Brisbane* (Figure 14), where views from the car window were used in a multi-piece format to show the transition from rural to city during car travel. Another early work, *Daytripper* (Figure 15) referenced time and travel in the calendar format, using snapshots of landscapes imbued with stories taken during adventures in the first liberating year of holding a driver's licence. These examples of pre-PhD artwork demonstrate an abiding fascination for understanding place through *moving* modes of observation, and for images that embody not only the visual but a multifaceted, non-static experience of place. I have, in other words, long been compelled to know and communicate *'place as a mode of experience and action'* (Larsen and Johnson 2012 p.637).

Figure 14. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2001, *Lismore to Brisbane*, acrylic & mixed materials on canvas, sizes variable

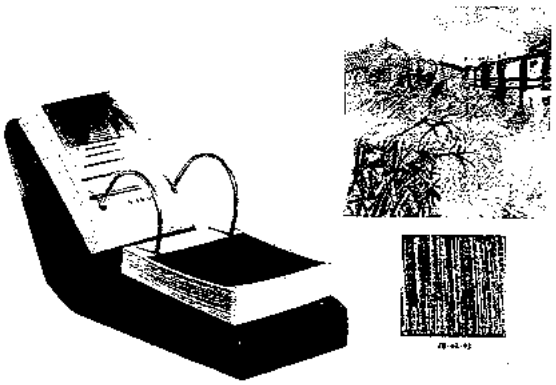

Figure 15. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2003, *Day Tripper*, mixed materials, sizes variable

Driving

In the exhibition *Interior/Exterior*, the triptych *Western Arterial* (Figure 16) maps the Western Arterial Road, that is a major route connecting Cairns with the Northern Beaches. This highway, sandwiched between cane fields and a densely foliaged mountain range, offers an astonishingly rich visual experience. When I first drove this road it seemed to stretch on forever; specific markers along the route were not yet recognisable. Following repeated journeys, the unknown subtly shifted to the familiar. Over time, I became aware of changes in the seasons and I could recognise the time of year and weather conditions that would bring the cane flowers to bloom and catch the sunlight in a particularly alluring way. The paintings in this exhibition mark this phase in my coming-to-know this region along this road and so my unfolding connection to place.

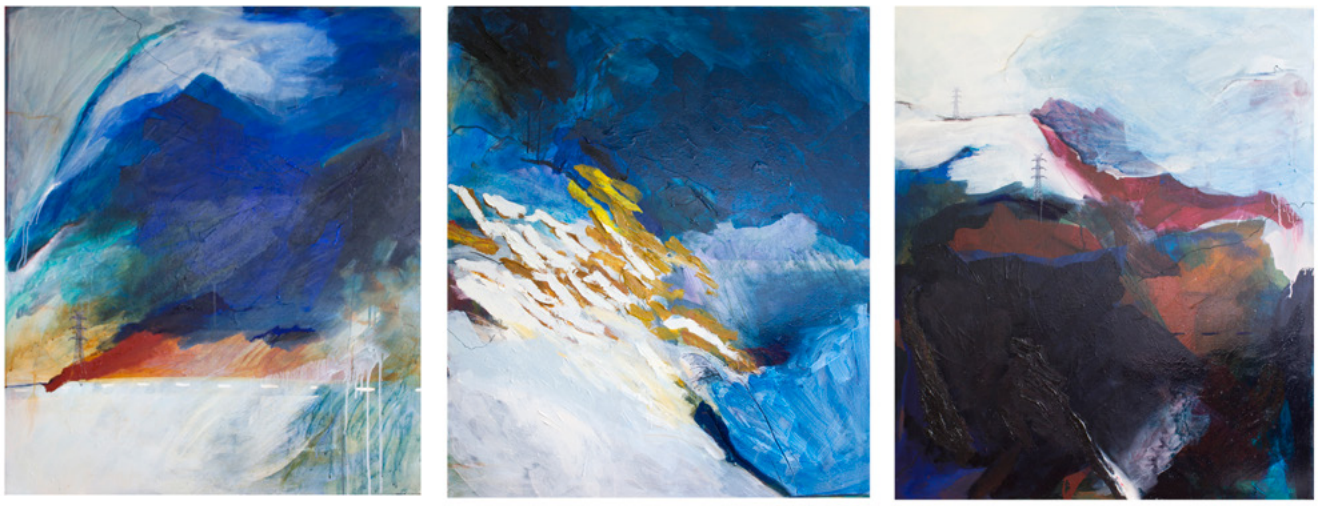

Figure 16. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014, *Western Arterial*, synthetic polymers & oil on canvas, each 110 x 90cm

Drivelines (Figure 17) deviated from the focus of a specific road and attempted to convey the landscape as I came to know it by driving through the region more generally. This work was an extension on earlier drawings made by holding pen to paper on the winding coastal roads (Figure 18). Brush and pastel marks reimagine the movement experienced, with attention to colour and fleeting ridgelines a focus. A shift in perspective presents and a performative sense of painting begins to play in these compositions, both of which would become a key aspect in later works within this research.

Figure 17. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014, *Drivelines*, mixed materials on paper, 77 x 210cm

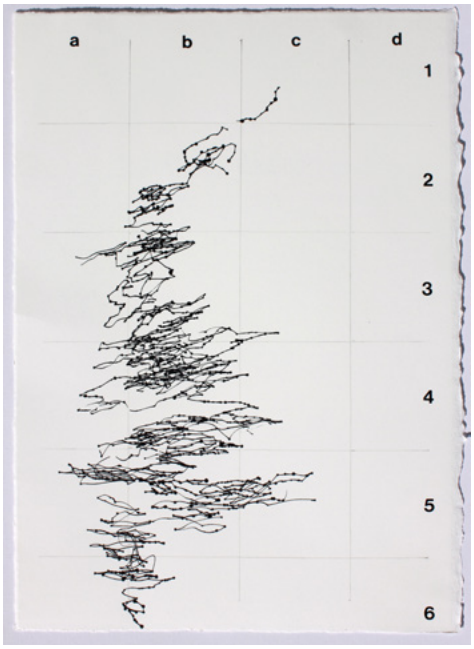

Figure 18. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2011, *Ellis Beach to Rex Lookout*, pen on paper, 30 x 24cm

One key outcome of the *Interior/Exterior* exhibition was that it led me to consider how I could further my relationship with Cairns and its surrounds. I felt a need investigate ways to integrate the exterior environment with my interior understanding of place. Ingold (2011) describes travel by car as fundamentally destination oriented. The traveller moves as a strapped in passenger encased in a vessel; only upon reaching a destination does the traveller's body begin to physically move. Ingold's writing on movement and embodiment facilitated the realisation that as well as giving up on my car, I needed to give up on the notion of travel as my primary method of place-making. So I began to consider walking as a mode of place-making. As I was to discover, this enabled me to connect with the tropical terrain with a focus on a slower paced, bodily orientation.

Solvituv Ambulando! From driving to walking

Solvituv Ambulando! Solve it by walking! This Roman expression encapsulates the next step in my place-making methods. I have always been an avid walker and I realised that I had overlooked walking as a means of place-making as it was a part of my everyday life. While driving allowed me to, quite literally, cover more ground it seemed somehow less mundane than walking. I had yet to understand the profound place-making that occurs with the seemingly ordinary act of placing one foot in front of the other.

View from the top of Earl Hill (Figure 19) was shown in the first staging exhibition and gestured to what would become the crucial shift from movement via car travel to explorations of the landscape on foot. In my local area, a bush track winds its way to the top of Earl Hill affording panoramic views past Yorkey's Knob Marina, and out to the Coral Sea. I walked the Earl Hill track each week and my early work focussed on the outlook from the peak. Overtime, a transition occurred where I became more interested in the on-route experiences of coming-to-know place and not just the rewarding view of the turquoise expanse of water from the summit. On the way up and down the hill, I felt a sense of place developing as I took my time, sweated, encountered wildlife, tripped over roots and heard the crunch underfoot. It was in these moments of direct bodily experience that I fully *felt* the environment.

Figure 19. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014, *View from the top of Earl Hill No.2*, synthetic polymers on paper, 77 x 55cm

Phenomenologist Edmund Husserl (1970) championing walking as an essential mode by which to access to place, suggests that place is not a location, but an inner and kinaesthetic experience of one's surrounds (Casey 2013). In a similar vein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty noted that embodiment and place are intrinsically related: 'The places we inhabit are known by the bodies we live. Moreover, we cannot be emplaced without being embodied. Conversely, to be embodied is to be capable of emplacement'

(ibid., p.277). In Chapter Three, I will investigate this idea in relation to perception and painting in more depth. The ideas of Husserl and Meleau-Ponty summoned me to take a slower approach to place-making and to reconsider my task of understanding place as a primarily cognitive pursuit. I understood that it was necessary to bring my body and embodied experience into the picture. And, at the very least, I needed to get out of my air-conditioned car.

Walking thus became a means to move beyond a fast-moving, sensorially-isolated, destination-orientated approach to place and painting. As I developed my walking methodology, I researched philosophers who wrote about the value of walking in place-making. Frederic Gros (2015), for example, poetically illuminates how this particular mode of understanding occurs, drawing attention to the kinaesthetic access to place through the absorptive, multisensory engagement enabled through walking:

> In a train or car, we see a mountain coming towards us. The eye is quick, active, it thinks it has understood everything, grasped it all. When you are walking, nothing really moves: it is rather that presence is slowly established in the body. When we are walking, it isn't so much that we are drawing nearer, more that the things out there become more and more insistent in our body. The landscape is a set of tastes, colours, scents which the body absorbs (p.37-38).

Tim Edensor (2010) writes of the way that walking enables a 'mindful passage' through unfamiliar landscapes:

> Through walking, a distinct embodied material and sociable dwelling-in-motion emerges as place is experienced as the predictable passing of familiar fixtures under the same conditions. But this may also emerge through mindful passage across unfamiliar terrain through which the body adapts to the land underfoot, and the peculiarities of place are apprehended at a slower rhythm than is offered through speedier modes of transport...The walking body weaves a path that is contingent, and accordingly produces contingent notions of place as well as being always partially conditioned by the special and physical characteristics of place (p.70).

Edensor's description of the reciprocal nature of the embodied self and place is critical to the central ideas of this research, so well expressed by Casey (2001): *'there is no place without self and no self without place*' (p.684, italics in original). As both these philosophers of place contend, the paths that one makes in the world are individualised yet moulded in ways by the specific environment. In other words, places shape people and people make places. They do not exist without interaction. Walking, as I was to discover, can be key to such interaction and so to appreciating place-making as a slow, iterative, embodied and multi-sensuous process.

Place-making discoveries:

This review of place-based literature investigated the question: *How can a review of literature regarding of movement through a landscape contribute an understanding of emplacement in the wet tropics and influence the research scope?* Key findings from this enquiry helped to frame my research as a mode of place-making and refine my scope to a bipedal method.

Overall, as an artist-researcher this project led me to novel insights regarding the inseparable nature of emplacement and embodiment that, in turn, transformed my approach to painting, reflected in both form and content. Emplacement is not cognitive and reflective (static), rather bodily and felt (moving). The embodied understanding of place is accumulated through everyday lived experiences and interactions as I move through the landscape. Therefore, seemingly mundane daily interactions contain profound experiences connected to processes of place-making. Through the wayfaring method and practice that I will later develop further, I discovered that place and time are connected and that giving attention to everyday bodily experience of moving though places enables one to 'gather' and instil an accumulative store of bodily knowledge. I came to realise that as a research method, driving through a landscape enables one to cover/see large areas of land, however, it limits a deep multi-sensory connection with the surrounding environment. Rather, the everyday act of walking provides a mode to enable quality place-making. Walking slows down one's physical pace, supporting a more resonate bodily engagement with the environment. This enables direct contact in the landscape and provides opportunities for various sensuous experiences that can inform and indeed transform art-making.

Stage 2: The Outset

A familiar spring enters my step at the start of a walk. My feet bounce and my eyes dart around, upand down, eager to take in every detail of the location. I recognise the morning light and the familiar crunch... crunch... crunch... underfoot. My enthusiasm leads to a flurry of snapshots: the trail name sign, a thumbs-up from my walking companion, the sky, my feet, and an unusual fern. This photographing becomes more selective as the walk progresses and increasingly abstract. Past experience means I know the trail ahead is long and my legs may well grow weary, but for now I revel in the ambulatory act, anticipating what may be around each bend. This well-worn path has a directional pull reinforced by reassuring orange arrowheads that lure me further into the densely covered terrain.

Chapter Two: Walking

Trailblazer: (noun) A person who makes a new track through wild country.[9]

Wayfaring: [B]reaking a path through terrain and leaving a trace, at once in the imagination and on the ground, in a manner very similar to what happens when we walk along a world of earth and sky. [10]

As described in the previous chapter, while making work for the *Interior/Exterior* exhibition I had assumed that travel was the necessary key to understanding, and depicting, the local landscape. Yet the resulting exhibition had fallen well short of my expectations. It lacked tenacity, depth and bodily understanding of place; I had drawn too heavily from my 'southern' ways of practice in seeing and navigating the new terrain. Although this phase of art-making was a valuable and necessary stage in this research, I was still only 'skimming the surface of the world', to use Ingold's (2011) suggestive term (p.150).

At this point I made a decisive change. I turned to walking, and specifically to wayfaring, drawing on the work of Ingold (2007) who describes wayfaring as the fundamental mode in which we inhabit the earth, as we are emplaced via travel *along* paths:

To be a place, every somewhere must lie on one or several paths of movement to and from places elsewhere. Life is lived *along* paths, not just *in* places, and paths are lines of sort. It is along paths, too, that people grow into a knowledge of the world around them, and describe the world in the stories they tell (p.2, my emphasis).

9 New Oxford American Dictionary 2010.

10 Ingold 2011, p.178

What drew me to wayfaring was the multifaceted awareness of place and its ambiguous boundaries, both on the ground and in the imagination. Framed as wayfaring, I was free to approach place-making not in terms of defining fixed destinations, but as an ever-present and unfolding subjective experience. Wayfaring helped me to express the indeterminate concept of place by evoking a meshwork of paths entwined in the surrounding environment, layered in time, memory and embodied knowledge.

As Jillian Hamilton and Luke Jaaniste (2009) argue, 'it is through an ongoing dialogue between practice, theory and topic that the research question begins to make itself clear, and the shape of the research project resolves itself' (p.6). They write also that 'the research intent, and the role of the artefact, is to produce affect and resonance through evocation' (ibid. p.4). These insights helped me to make sense of the route this research has taken and to appreciate why it took a third of the overall research timeline to really grasp the research problem I was grappling with. A research question crystallised: *How can a body of contemporary visual art evoke the experience of wayfaring in tropical North Queensland?*

This chapter describes Stage Two of this research, the point in which wayfaring emerged as the central investigative method, enabling me to forge new routes in the studio as a result of walking mindfully in the local natural terrain. As I will explain, this development in my painting felt like a kind of 'trailblazing'. I had to embrace uncertainty in order to develop a new form of wayfaring as both a driver and mode of creative practice. This phase of the research culminated in the second staging exhibition titled *Trilogy* held in the Cairns KickArts Contemporary Arts gallery.

Mindful walking in the age of distraction

Figure 20. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014-2016, *Research Journal Photographs from the Cairns Region*, digital photographs

As I turned decisively to walking daily along forest trails, stretches of beach and mangrove boardwalks in the tropical landscape (as shown in Figure 20), I continued to read literature regarding walking and wayfaring. I realised that wayfaring as a method of place-making and basis for creative practice-based research entailed more than just going on a daily walk or continuing my former routine. In some ways I was more than ever in unfamiliar terrain and so needed to develop a focussed, receptive and attentive attitude to consciously absorb the surrounding environment in the hope of creating persuasive artwork.

I adopted the term *mindful walking* to highlight the act of being present when walking, which involved mediative attributes, conscious multi-sensory observations and reflection (Jung 2014). For instance, the work *Rock Hop* (Figure 21) explores a forest trail with a creek-crossing. When unusual encounters occurred such as traversing a creek by walking across slippery stones, I would deliberately savour the experience. I would note the rough texture under hand and foot, listen intensely to the sounds of flowing water and focus in on a single leaf snaking down the stream. In these ways I specifically cultivated a method that was quite distinct from my former destination-based pedestrianism, where the focus was, for example, on conquering the peak, or simply getting from A to B. I found that walking receptively provided many multi-sensory impressions.

Figure 21. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Rock Hop*, mixed materials, sizes variable

The tropical Cairns region is threaded with mountains, walking trails, coastline and bush, all of which provided an array of natural terrains for long solitary walks in dramatically beautiful landscape. Even the built-up areas in Cairns, gardens and streetscapes feature lush tropical flora and fauna. For instance, in the Cairns CBD, flying-foxes hang low from large looming fig trees, while muddy mangroves run alongside the main esplanade. This variety of sense impressions, together with a

cultivated feeling of becoming immersed in nature, provided a strong contrast to my former painting practice where urban environments and weathered walls informed my painting approach.

Regardless of location being a mindful walker presents challenges. It is possible to become distracted with the connectivity provided with mobile phones, making us on call at all times. The trend of navigating the world with a device in hand has resulted in city councils painting safety signage on the ground at road crossings to address the increase of a downcast gaze of pedestrians. The complexity and availability of information in western lifestyles is highlighted by neuroscientist Daniel Levitin (2014) who writes that we live in an age of 'information overload', absorbing twenty-five times more information daily than we did twenty-five years ago (p.13). Another troubling statistic is that in western cultures people are sitting an average of 9.3 hours per day, a practice described as 'the smoking of our generation' (Merchant 2016). This combination of distraction-filled, sedentary and 'busy' lifestyles can make mindful walking practices difficult to cultivate.

The wayfaring approach I have developed deliberately seeks to counter the fast-paced, sedentary and information overload of our digital age. It took time, effort and practice to become a wayfarer. I endeavoured to consciously minimise anything that competed with my attention such as to-do lists, newsfeeds, notifications, as well as an underlying belief that my time must be used 'productively'. An integral part of my walking method involved deliberately setting aside guilt associated with not seeming to be 'productive' at my desk or in my studio. In this way I was able to steadily develop a wayfaring method, which involved walking and painting mindfully and without digital distraction.

Over time, I found that as I walked paths and followed imaginative trails, clarity of thought and creative insights unfolded. The conscious move towards slowing my pace and walking mindfully meant that my sensory perception was gradually developed and refined. Details that I had once overlooked shifted into focus and became points of inquiry. Ingold argues that children naturally possess this kind of inquisitive approach to walking, whereby even a short stroll down the street can become a labyrinth of adventures (Morrison-Bell et al. 2013). Children take on a detective-like outlook where all sensory elements are absorbed, and details observed (Ingold and Lee 2006). Distance is exaggerated by their lower eye-level and closer proximity to the ground and, in the process, every tree or rock can be seen to have a point of difference or imaginary tale (Gros 2015). As people grow up, they generally become less playfully attentive, and form generalised impressions whereby individual paths blend to become the same broad landscape (ibid.). However, by participating in receptive walking, adults can retreat from desensitisation and develop 'a freeing of the body, a rediscovery of childish sensation, and aesthetic… regeneration' (Edensor 2000, p.84). This was my task as a novice wayfarer.

Following her relocation to Australia from New Zealand, artist Rosalie Gascoigne came to understand the different markers of the Australian landscape during walks with her children (Gellatly 2008).

According to Gascoigne, walking with these youngsters provided the 'playful interactions' with the environment that helped hone her eye for detail: 'I look for the eternal truths in nature, the rhythms, cycles, seasons, shapes, regeneration, restorative powers, spirit' (cited in Gellatly 2008, p.9). Gascoigne's attentiveness to her environment gave rise to an individual kind of knowledge. Hamish Fulton is another artist who views walking as a formative part of creative practice. Fulton embraces the intensity of experiences in the landscape and describes that with no walk there is no work (Schlieker ed. 2011).

The Romantic poet William Wordsworth is another example of a mindful walker. Wordsworth walked almost every day and approached pedestrianism not as a mode of travel, but a way of being (Solnit 2000). The 'pedestrian viewpoint' afforded a perceptive awareness and pace that allowed this poet's gaze to linger and come to deeply understand the surrounding landscape (Gaillet-De Chezelles 2010). Pedestrian immersion in the landscape provided inspiration that enabled Wordsworth to create poems with enduring and detailed representations of place (Solnit 2000).

Walking and creativity: a well-trodden path

Joseph Amato (2004) suggests that the purpose of undertaking a walk informs the walkers 'steps from beginning to end' (p.3). Yet the reasons for walking are as diverse as the individuals involved and the terrains they explore. I once walked the Inca Trails in Peru to the awe-inspiring Machu Picchu. I felt a sense of history weighing heavily on my shoulders during this well-known walk. This experience taught how walking on a path can generate a suite of impressions and understandings. It felt to me as if the path had a mysterious power.

The reasons and history of walking are wide-ranging and fascinating. Pilgrimages by foot are valued in many cultures and in various religions. Examples include the Camino route to Santiago de Compastela walked by Christians since medieval times and, the journey to Mecca and the Ganges walked by Hindu and Muslim people (Ford 2017). Religious pilgrimages are one of many notable motives for walking. Other people walk in protest groups, as refugees, to fundraise, to hunt or forage in the bush, for romance or leisure.

The intersection of walking, philosophising and creativity also has a rich history, with tangents meandering through various cultures and time periods. A cultural activity practiced by Ancient Greeks was to walk to think (Solnit 2000) leading to the Peripatetic Philosophers/School following the teaching methods Aristotle (384-322 BCE) (Furley 2016). The architecture of Ancient Greece evidences the daily occurrence of walking, as the architecture was designed to accommodate pedestrian activities (Solnit 2000).

Prominent philosophers have advocated the benefits of pedestrianism, adopting and customising walking routines as part of their daily life. For example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau [1712-1778] enjoyed lengthy solitary walks in forests and claimed that he could not think nor create except when walking (Gros 2011). For Henry Thoreau [1817-1862], walking amongst nature had the capacity to simultaneously empty the mind, and fill it with a new sense of purpose (ibid.). Thoreau developed personal pilgrimages, and once 'walked ten miles through snow one winter to keep an appointment with a beech tree' (Ford 2017, p.54). Friedrich Nietzsche [1844-1900] (1889) acknowledged the relationship between bipedal movement and producing new insights by proclaiming that 'all truly great thoughts are conceived by walking' (p.34). Solnit (2000) supports the long-standing notion that ambulatory movement wanders readily into philosophy and landscape, when she writes: 'the rhythm of walking generates a kind of rhythm of thinking, and the passage through the landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts' (p.5).

During this research, I found that the clarity of thought generated through walking rhythms was (metaphorically) mirrored in the sky during beach walks at dusk. Often when the sky fades from dusty pink to steel blue on the horizon, the surrounding ridgeline is silhouetted and wrinkles its way through the gradated sky. I draw similarities with such aspects to my own path following the tideline or my imagination meandering out to sea, while the quiet whooshing of waves add texture to my pedestrian pace. During these layered experiences my bodily rhythms felt synergistic with those of the surrounding environment. Such pedestrian movement invited inroads to the deeper undercurrents and connections between internal and external terrains; between self, land, sea and sky. In this way I relate to artist Sidney Nolan, who notes that landscape painters should seek 'the constant beneath' rather than the surface level of 'sitting in the sun' (cited in Clarke 2013, p.21).

Recent research in the field of neuroscience affirms longstanding observations that bipedal movement increases the free flow of ideas. Marily Oppezzo and Daniel Schwartz (2014) conducted a study comparing creativity between people who were seated and those who were walking. They found all participants were more creative when walking, and creativity was increased if participants were walking in natural environments. Furthermore, participants' creativity was heightened in the period following the walk. This study supports the view that the slow cadence of walking offers a quality contemplative state that fosters the formation of divergent ideas.

The evidence regarding the value of walking in terms of creativity made available through the sciences influenced my studio research practice, as much as the writings of poets and philosophers. I applied this knowledge in practice. For example, when a painting barrier such as a key colour decision or 'what next?' situation emerged, rather than forcing an outcome in the studio, I would walk to the local beach and back. I would walk slowly, breathing deeply, taking in my surrounds, always keeping an eye out for

a croc on the muddy banks of the inlet as I crossed the on-route bridge. I never saw a crocodile there, only mangroves, crabs and birds; but others have seen crocodiles, so I remain vigilant. During the walk, my subconscious worked away at the painting decisions and I would often return to the studio with clarity and a solution. Taking an ambulatory 'break', in short, was a highly productive creative method.

Painting: place-making and path-making

> For paths run through people surely as they run through places. [11]

During 2015 an important aesthetic shift occurred in the artwork I made for second staging exhibition of this research. The challenge of how to convey the bodily and multisensory engagement of wayfaring in my paintings as a means of developing emplacement had become my preoccupation during the second phase of creative work. As I experimented with ways of evoking my wayfaring experience, paths and lines emerged as key compositional features in the paintings.

Jeff Malpas (2011) argues that although different in each case, an authentic artistic representation of the landscape bares the particular influence and active involvement of the artist's experience. For me, path-making provided the motif to explore the mental and physical terrains I sought to give form to in the studio. Approaching the landscape in terms of paths enabled me to express my growing understanding of the ways that perception of our surroundings can be understood through locomotion (Gibson 1979). Paths and lines in my paintings joined with shape, colour and texture, conveying a sense of movement and shifting perspectives that sought to suggest a journey through the terrain in a more poetic manner than the earlier, and more literal, works.

The interrelationship between imaginary and tangible trails, along with following paths, tracks, offshoots and desire lines[12] became somewhat of an obsession during this phase of research. I became aware that my walks could stimulate my imagination and I sought to reflect how this occurred and what, in turn, resulted. I was walking receptively and engaging with the 'suite of [bipedal] bodily performances that include observing, monitoring, remembering, listening, crouching and climbing' (Ingold and Lee 2006, p.5), and yet my attention towards the specific and individual aspects in and of the environment stimulated an impression of an all-encompassing and connected realm. Both in my memory and later in the works I produced, paths, insect trails, tideline debris, ridgelines and waterways (shown in Figure 22) coalesced in forming macro and micro scales that oscillated between human and non-human sources.

11 Macfarlane 2012, p.26.

12 A desire-line is defined as a path that pedestrians take informally, rather than taking a sidewalk or set route; e.g. a well-worn ribbon of dirt that one sees cutting across a patch of grass, or paths in snow (YourDictionary 2018).

Figure 22. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014-2017, *Research images 'Paths'*, digital photographs

Lines transited between those created by addition and removal, such as the trail of an insect on a leaf and composite tidelines formed by physical materials washing waves of materials on the shore (Figure 22). The idea of pathways being active lines created through erasure or addition, rather than static marks, became a compositional influence in my painting. For instance, I added lines by removing paint and sanding back layers to reveal underlying ridges of materials. These created pathways that anchored compositions layered with texture, colour and symbols derived from wayfaring experiences, as shown in *Headspace* (Figure 23) and *Wayfaring No.2* (Figure 24). *Headspace* indicates a synthesis of adding and revealing lines along with the layered experience of walking and the generative, imaginative "headspace" that arises during a walk. *Wayfaring No.2* focuses on the textures experienced along tropical paths.

Figure 23. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Headspace*, synthetic polymers on canvas, 110 x 95cm

Figure 24. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Wayfaring No.2*, synthetic polymers on canvas, 95 x 110cm

In these ways, paths became a visual distillation of a complex and continual relationship between mind, body and the world around me. Christopher Tilley (1994) poetically describes the process in which I found myself engrossed in the studio:

> In movement on a path through the landscape something is constantly slipping away and something is constantly gained in a relational tactile world of impressions, signs, sights, smells and physical sensations (p.31).

The recurring symbol of an arrowhead marker in my paintings became an important sign of my

presence, movement and engagement in the environment. Arrowheads are used globally as guides on hiking trails. These indicators provide a sense of reassurance and safety, and sometimes offer a lifeline in tropical North Queensland terrains. A range of arrowheads are shown in Figure 25, indicating how the markers become weathered into the natural landscapes in which they are placed. The once shiny man-made signs, weathered or grown over by nature, resonated with my feeling of being immersed in the tropics. The gaps between markers produced a beat or rhythm during a walk and I sought to echo this in the paintings. Further analysis of these quasi-cartographic elements is addressed in the following chapters.

Figure 25. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014-2017, *Research images 'Arrowheads'*, digital photographs

Another shift in my creative process during this phase of research was the actual physical pace of painting. I found that in response to my wayfaring, I applied the line work in a similar meditative manner as mindful walking. I would *go slow* both on the ground and in the studio. Sometimes, in the studio, I meandered the brush or scraping implement as if to reimagine a distant aerial map view of my earlier movement. Other times, I deliberately called to mind a ridgeline or steep incline experienced, or even the general ambiance of a walk. Although the painting became slower and more deliberate in application, elements of chance were encountered and incorporated. An increased confidence to apply compositional respite, through the use of space, emerged as a significant development in painting process. Previously, I had painted at a faster pace, perhaps subconsciously influenced by the speed of action painters such as Jackson Pollock. I had assumed fast painting was a means to capture raw expression, however, I now realised that 'raw expression' can be achieved equally as effectively with thick paint applied at a slower, pedestrian pace.

Figure 26. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Go Slow,* synthetic polymers on canvas, 95 x 110cm

Many hikers espouse the value of leaving 'only your footprints behind'. I appreciate the environmental respect that this mantra implies, while remaining intrigued by the oxymoron of invisible presence it gestures towards. Richard Long's art practice embodies marks we leave in the environment, as indicated in iconic example *A Line Made by Walking* (1967). Long's practice is summarised as 'simple creative acts of walking and marking about place, locality, time, distance and measurement' (richardlong.org 2017). In Long's work, *A Line in the Himalayas* (Figure 27), natural materials have been rearranged to form an ephemeral sculptural path within the landscape. The empty physical traces produced by Long have become the substance of imagining where viewers are invited to engage in an inner journey, even if it is a different path to the artist's (Long 1991). The poetic quality of Long's work has been influential to the development of my creative practice. It has prompted me to consider how my presence in the landscape might become ingrained in my painting in a distilled manner and how I might also extend the use of a path-making motif.

Figure 27. Richard Long, 1975 printed 2004, *A Line in the Himalayas*, digital print on paper mounted onto aluminium, 86 x 128 cm

Solnit (2000) argues that this reliance on ambiguous presence is an underpinning feature in much contemporary art, where the viewer has to engage, imagine and fill in the purposely-left gaps in order to make sense of the artwork. Solnit's notion led me to consider how incorporating paths into abstract painting might not only reveal insights into my wayfaring journey, but invite the viewer to meander imaginatively in, around and beyond the artwork as well. In this way the work purposefully alludes to what lies beyond the artwork frame.

It was evident that a form of praxis took shape in this phase of my research whereby the influence of precedents of practice by artists, theoretical reading and receptive walking were actively informing and impacting upon my creative work. I walked and painted attuned, for instance, to Tilley's (1994) description that strong paths are 'kept open' and readily followed by continual use, while unmaintained tracks are ephemeral, and that it takes confidence to forge new trails. While painting for the second staging exhibition *Trilogy*, I consciously forged new forms of mark-making through combinations of strong compositional lines with fainter inscriptions in order to covey the variety of physical and imagined wayfaring explorations. *Wayfaring I* (Figure 28) shows a variety of paths with qualities of strength, disappearance or surface scratches. In direct reference to Tilley's description, I also worked to 'keep open' some compositional paths by re-inscribing or revealing through negative space.

Figure 28. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Wayfaring No.1*, synthetic polymers on canvas, 130 x 140cm

At times, I read passages that offered an almost uncanny articulation of what I had been trying to grasp in the studio. For instance, Gros (2015) describes the sensation of resting after a long day's walk-in writing:

> [C]lose your eyes and feel on your body the layers of landscape dissolving and recomposing... the colour of the sky, the flashes of leaves, the outlines of the jumbled hills (p.97).

I was working on *Wayfaring No.2* (Figure 24) at the time I read Gros' lyrical description, which stopped me in my (metaphorical) tracks. I looked up from the page and around the empty room in amazement. It was as if he had pinned down in a few concise words what I aimed to express in paint. "Layers dissolving and recomposing" I whispered aloud with a smile as I walked over to the canvas where I saw sky, flashes of leaves and a ridgeline. As well as being a humbling reminder as to why I am a painter and not a poet, such revelations were pivotal in clarifying my intentions and grasping the incorporeal aspects of my wayfaring experience.

Becoming a tropical artist

The physical demands of wayfaring in the tropics changed my understanding of place and therefore my creative expression in specific ways. As the landscape profoundly influenced my mode of exploration and resulting painting approach, an understanding of phenomenology facilitated attentiveness to the ways that my body felt in the tropics. As I became immersed in walking in the tropics I wanted to explore this 'northern' influence further. The high humidity during walks provoked a hyper awareness of the atmosphere on my skin and an alertness of the presence of tropical 'dangers' like crocodiles,

cyclones and heat exhaustion. As familiarisation occurred with the 'foreign' tropical environment, a confidence in expressing how I *felt* in place developed in my painterly approach.

Robert Macfarlane (2012), a highly experienced author regarding walking, observed that interactions with nature reveal or unfold moments and insights in a discreet and sometimes wondrous manner. This had been my experience in the natural terrain of Far North Queensland, and it was this distinctly wondrous aspect that I aimed to achieve in my paintings. My growing orientation towards the natural over the built-environment was nothing unusual, given the prevalence of nature in paintings of the tropical region (Luckman 2009; Wilson 1998). As Susan Luckman's 2009 study revealed, creative practitioners in another northern Australian city, Darwin, identified the natural environment, especially coastal areas, a key quality of place enabling creativity. Luckman (2009) notes that this is due to the coastline being a 'key part of its natural environment and beauty' (p.5). For me, the coastline not only became a part of everyday life it became something of a muse.

Cultural understandings of what constitutes a natural environment vary considerably. Donald Johnson et al. (1997) defines that 'a natural environment is one *relatively* unchanged or undisturbed by human culture' (p.582 italics my emphasis). Yet Arnold Berleant acknowledges that 'nature, in the sense of the earth apart from human intervention, has mostly disappeared' (Carlson and Berleant eds. 2004, p.80). As a researcher, I acknowledge that the natural environment is indeed mediated by human interaction and it is by no means 'untouched'. And yet in my wayfaring, I embrace Johnson's (1997) view where the 'natural environment' 'is one *relatively* unchanged or undisturbed by human culture' (p.582). In the natural environments that I have explored during this research such as Hinchinbrook Island, a National Park off the coast south of Cairns, there is minimal human impact from western culture. Other environments are located in close proximity to residential areas. Many of the terrains investigated as a basis for creative practice involved an relationship with the coastline and an outlook to the Coral Sea, therefore echoing Luckman's (2009) Darwin study findings where the coastline was identified as being highly influential to creative inspiration.

Moving away from a my comfortable structural approach prior to commencing this research, indicated in Figure 29, involved a struggle in resolving compositions. For this reason, the suite of six works in the second staging exhibition involved a major shift in strategy and methods. For instance, the 'southern' work (Figure 29) was built up through a visually based approach by painting from photograph projections, while *Wayfaring No.3* (Figure 30) was developed with layers of texture and a reimagining of what it felt like to move through terrain, including from an imaginary view from above.

South

Figure 29. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2008, *Lismore Laneway Landscape No.3*, synthetic polymers on canvas, 100 x 80cm

North

Figure 30. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Wayfaring No.3*, synthetic polymers on canvas, size 100 x 110cm

The shift towards influences from the natural environment involved change in colour usage. Vibrancy and saturation of colour became a key as I attempted to respond to rich plant-life, dark weighty shadows, densely covered mountains, bright light, intense clear skies and the moody Coral Sea. However, unlike typical tropical depictions that are often consistently bright and colourful, I aimed to capture a nuanced range of tone and hue. In response, a range of colour mixing techniques were developed to reflect local colours and, in so doing, to also meander into new imaginary terrains. The overall palette was refined across the three exhibitions with the result that the final colour scheme had changed considerably from that of my earlier 'southern' palette.

Contributing to the tropical field as a walking artist-researcher

In the arts, walking has become 'increasingly central as a means of both creating new embodied ways of knowing and producing scholarly narrative' (Pink, Hubbard, O'Neill and Radley 2010, p.1). Walking, as a method, that involves the act of observing the world closely, can be used in arts research to connect with the natural environment and evoke fresh understandings of human-nature relationships (Duxbury 2008). In this walking-arts field there is a bias towards temperate climates. However, this research expands the field to include the wet tropics.

In 1959 artist Robert Rauschenberg famously stated that, 'Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in the gap between the two.)' (cited in Cleveland Museum of Art 1969). Rauschenberg's quote exemplifies a shift in the westerns arts, where the blurring the barriers between of art and life saw a range of new practices in arts. During the 1960s the every-day act of pedestrianism

became a broadly understood concept and theorists explored the relationship between geography, the body and time (Solnit 2000).

The growing interest in walking is reflected in the exhibition *Walk On: From Richard Long to Janet Cardiff- 40 years of Art Walking* (2013). The exhibition celebrates the history and diversity of walking art. It commences with the roots of performance and Land Art in the 1960s with seminal walking artist Long and moves through key artists in the field such as Joe Bateman, Hamish Fulton and Carey Young, bookending at the contemporary with Cardiff. The approaches and agendas of the exhibited artists are diverse from political to personal. In the catalogue essay Mike Collier describes that a connection amongst the variety 'is that they all take what I call an embodied or phenomenological approach to the making of their work' (Morrison-Bell et al. 2013, p. 73). Collier notes that the artists share the method of putting philosophy in action, that 'making art is the practical application of phenomenology' (ibid.). The performative gesture of walking or responding to such movement in a studio 'performance' via materials underpins this historical exhibition.

In Australia, the exhibition, *From Here to There: Australian Art and Walking* (2018) showcases contemporary walking artists and demonstrates the contemporary relevance of the field. Photography, film and sculpture are approaches among the diverse range of interpretations of everyday pedestrianism, featuring artists Lauren Brincat, Dean In Brown, Daniel Crooks, Agatha Gothe-Snape, Alex Karaconji, Noel McKenna, Sarah Mosca and Liam O'Brien. These two exhibitions provide a rich cross-section of key international and Australian walking artists. They show how artists employ the act of walking as the art or a key visual reference and those whose practice results as a consequence to the ambulatory act.

Regardless of their physical environment, the work of other walking-artist-researchers informed my considerations of how I was to approach the tropics. Catrin Webster is one such artist. Webster explores European landscape/place through embodied movement, with the *journey* a key aspect of her creative practice and she notes that a traditional fixed viewpoint of landscape is not reflective of contemporary everyday experience (Merriman and Webster 2009). This abstract approach (Figure 31), emphasises our kinaesthetic and time-based relationship with the environment as people are constantly on the move (Webster 2012).

Figure 31. Catrin Webster, 1990, *Walk Painting Mid-Wales,* oil on canvas, 195cm x 195cm

Figure 32. Catrin Webster, 1990, *Spanish Walk Book drawings* (one page from 30), ink and watercolour on paper, 25cm x 25cm

Webster has produced drawings *while* walking (Figure 32), sometimes using materials from the environment, with the intent of showing landscape as a conceptual experience that is fundamentally about movement (Webster 2012). In a series of drawings, which form an artist's book, Webster tells a progressive story of the journey. The key research methods Webster employs are exploring both urban and rural environments, and she also turns to travel via motorcycle, with an emphasis on the sensations experienced when riding, such as wind against body, the movement of cornering and feeling of vulnerability (ibid.).

Webster (2012) insists that, as an artist, there is a need to communicate the experience, wonder and sense of feeling alive during movement through landscapes, particularly because wonder is becoming absent from the world as a whole. The artist notes that 'travel and adventuring enable me to look differently at familiar and unfamiliar places' and, in turn, this novel perspective can then be translated into original works of art (Merriman and Webster 2009, p.533). This process invites the viewer on an imaginative journey.

Although I am opting for a slower pace in moving through landscape on foot, and focussing on natural environments, the motive of engaging with embodied perception and the resulting heightened sense of 'being alive' informs my research methodology.

Walking discoveries

Several findings emerged in investigating the sub-question, *in what way can walking as a research method*

contribute to mindful engagement with the natural environment and form a basis for painting practice?

I highlighted the longstanding synergy between pedestrianism and creativity in the creative practices of a number of artists and philosophers. These insights were then linked to my own practice as I claimed walking as a productive mode for stimulating creative thought and outcomes. In particular, I discussed how walking in nature has been adopted as a mode of meditative contemplation and has been consciously chosen by artists as a mode that counters the speed and distractions of contemporary life. To evoke the sensuous qualities of walking, including movement, time, terrain and texture, I established that paths/lines could be employed as a visual motif. This painting strategy allowed me to visually interpret Ingold's phenomenological approach to wayfaring through works of art.

Finally, it became evident that the rich history of walking-arts focuses on temperate climates, particularly European landscapes, while the topics remain under-represented. This project argues that place matters as much as walking, in fact they are intimately related in terms of generating knowledge of, and connection to, place. My focus on tropical North Queensland therefore provides an original contribution to the field and offers a new perspective of the tropical north through providing a walking-arts interpretation.

Groundwork laid for deeper immersion (and the final exhibition)

> The one certain thing about going north in Australia is that the further north you get the further north you want to go.[13]

As the tropical environment changed the type of paths I walked, I experienced the rhythms of landscape undulating at a different pace. As the climate altered my routines and I came to appreciate the depth and significance of this bodily coming-to-knowledge as distinctly structured by this tropical place. For years I had been exploring movement, place and time through creative practice, however mindful walking practices in the tropics moved me from my 'comfort zone' in both place and painting, resulting in new ways of seeing, sensing and responding.

I realised that, at this stage of the research, I had merely scratched the surface of potential outcomes and understandings in relation to my research question. In fact, after the second staging exhibition I deliberated on the idea of retreating to an isolated bush shack for decades, Ian Fairweather style, to enable me to properly explore the painterly possibilities and questions that the research so far had provoked.

13 Charmaine Clift 1970, p.222.

Creative anxieties of inadequacy notwithstanding, it was through the research phase described above that I began to discover, and slowly develop, the wayfaring aesthetic that eventually opened new pathways into theory and practice. I realise, in retrospect, that at this point I had only completed the metaphorical 'outset' stage of a walk. In the next chapter, I plunge into a deeper immersive stage, exploring the ideas of phenomenology, body-mapping and lines that began to further animate and focus my life of walking-painting-wayfaring.

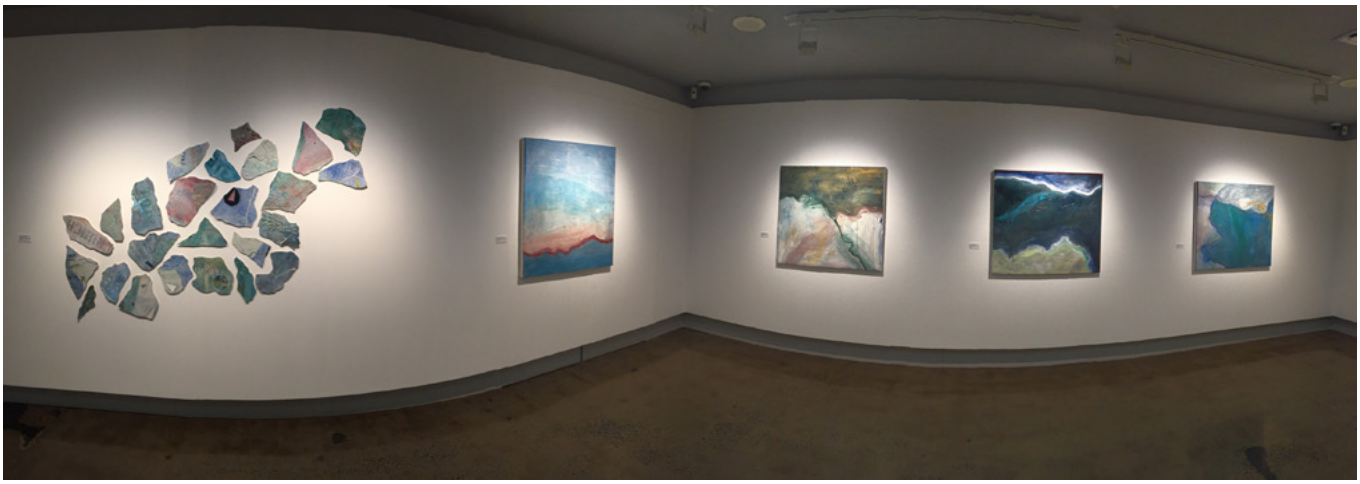

Figure 33. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Installation view of Trilogy exhibition* (KickArts Contemporary Arts, Cairns)

Stage 3: Immersion

At some point during a walk, I can lose track of time and become deeply immersed in my immediate surrounds. Perhaps it occurs when I realise that it is too far to turn back, even if there is a long path ahead. At this point, my distracted thinking abates, and I become aligned with the pedestrian pace. During these periods of immersion, the pull of daily responsibilities seems to dissipate. Sensations sharpen with the cadence. I note the light that dapples the leaf littered path. I hear a bush turkey scratching off to the side. I sense the humid air inviting the tactile mossy layer on what seems every low-lying surface. As my hands reach out to feel the texture of trunks, boulders and vines, the colours of the understory appear rich and dark, while a luminous blue peeks through from above a sun filled sky above.

As I follow the trail, my mind simultaneously forges more paths. Some meander back in time. I imagine the walkers who have followed this track before me and wonder how often other pedestrian travellers have enjoyed this place. I see flowing lines overlap and hear the sound of a creek bubbling in the distance. In another moment, I think of the film, *Honey I Shrunk the Kids*, and consider the lay of the land from an ant's perspective. I take care of where I place each step, to avoid disturbing any little creatures.

Such imaginings intersect and whisper in waves, leaving a dream-like trace on my memory. The real and imagined surroundings merge as it did during my childhood play. Absorbed and immersed, I feel 'at home in the world' (Jackson 1995, p.1). I keep to the unfolding rhythm of my pedestrian pace.

Chapter Three: Embodying Tropical Terrain

I reached the final phase of this research when my walking and art practices started to become integrated modes of wayfaring. As I worked towards my final exhibition, the distinction between walking in nature, a sense of place and painting in the studio, became increasingly blurred. A unified interior and exterior understanding of the tropics and my path to emplacement culminated in a form of wayfaring-painting. Literature regarding phenomenology with its emphasis on embodied experience has been formative in the conceptual dimensions of this move towards wayfaring-painting.

The lived-body and painting

The processes and activities that happen in the studio when I paint can feel natural or automatic. But generally this feeling of flow only occurs following the planning stage for a work. Prior to painting, I undertake an important stage of gathering and developing ideas through journaling, canvas preparation and walking in the landscape. Before a studio session, I often pace around the edges of the room like a boxer about to enter the ring, pumping myself up for the bout ahead, though unlike most boxers, I tend

to do this with a cup of tea in hand. Even with substantial planning, when the brush first touches the canvas, I find that a clearly defined and intentional goal remains elusive. Instead, I pursue what I have come to think of as an insistent 'vibe' developed through wayfaring. This allows for the work to unfold on the surface during the painting process through a series of discoveries made at a pedestrian pace.

Each decision during the painting informs and impacts on the next decision. Each choice is indirectly drawn from an accumulation of experiences, memories, and glimpses of particular images, textures, weather, distances and sensations. As painting is quite a physical activity, it is not unrealistic to compare this creative journey to a walk through the landscape. There are peaks and troughs, mind wandering occurs, conversations between canvases unfold, and, most importantly, the performative process inevitably wends its way to a destination. The process shapes and reveals the essence of the work in a manner that leads to moments of insight or clarity. Through this process the work reveals itself. I come to know my hitherto unformulated vision and intent *through* the work (Sullivan 2009).

This process differs from an Intentionalist position, argued by Richard Wollheim (1987), whereby painting is approached as an activity that involves, firstly, an intention and, secondly, the realisation of the intention. In an Intentionalist position, a painting is a work of art, because its predetermined representation is reached (Wentworth 2004). By contrast, I reimagine my sensuous wayfaring experiences in the form of paint in a manner that cannot be known from the outset. When I begin a painting, the general formal elements of colour and composition are gleaned from impressions gathered during walks, however as the painting develops via wayfaring ideas and sensations, I move from reimagining the external terrain to being absorbed in the new environment of the painting. Wayfaring in paint, in other words, provides a non-Intentionalist framework to express, with confidence, movement through the landscape and progress into abstraction.

This research process has enabled me to develop a method whereby when I paint, I draw from a bodily reservoir of experience in the landscape. Founding phenomenologist Edmund Husserl described 'walking as the experience by which we understand our body in relationship to the world' (Solnit 2000, p.27). This embodied knowledge developed through pedestrianism is multisensory, temporal and involves the sensations of a moving body, memory and imagination. Phenomenology extended my appreciation of the role of embodied perception in place-making, by highlighting how painting can embody lived experience.

Phenomenology positions human experience as the basis of knowledge (Kaufer and Chemero 2015). As a major philosophical movement of the 20th century, phenomenology is not a single or singular philosophical tradition. Its many contributors result in various currents, critiques and emphasis (Moran 2000). Within this extensive and often intellectually challenging field, I have drawn primarily on the work of French philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1993). His foundational claim that *embodiment*

is essential to understanding frames my research. According to Anthony Chemero this emphasis on embodied perception is where phenomenology 'gets it right' due to the ways in which Merleau-Ponty drew from his predecessors and combined this with knowledge of neuroscience to formulate his own philosophy (Kaufer and Chemero 2015).

Through the notion of the *lived-body*, Merleau-Ponty (1993) rejects previous separate distinctions between the mind and body, refusing the reduction of the body to the purely physical or mechanical and, instead, locates perceptual consciousness as an entire bodily awareness (Wentworth 2004). For Merleau-Ponty, the body is the essential mediation point between thought, world and understanding (Tilley 1994). Humans skillfully engage with the world through embodied experience and 'our perceptual experience is primordially of ourselves as a body situated in a world, one that extends all around us, and through which we move' (Merleau-Ponty 1993 p.124). Therefore, the body is instilled with consciousness that develops understandings of the world and, similarly, consciousness is an embodied part of the world (Smith 2013).

Merleau-Ponty's insistence that the lived-body moves and exists within a world of meaning therefore refuses a clear-cut distinction between *mind* and *body* (Kaufer and Chemero 2015). Nigel Wentworth (2004) explains: 'The lived-body as a situated subject is neither a mind nor a body in the traditional sense, nor yet a unity of the two. Instead, it occupies an ambiguous realm that straddles the two' (p.11). This formulation brings the senses to the fore as a foundational mode of experiencing the world around us, or as Merleau-Ponty (1993) states:

> The body's animation is not the assemblage or juxtaposition of its parts. Nor is it a question of a mind or a spirit coming down from somewhere into an automation... A human body is present when, between the seer and the visible, between touching and touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand a kind of crossover occurs, when the spark of the sensing/sensible is lit (p. 125).

Merleau-Ponty maintained that the task of phenomenology was to shed light on this ambiguous realm: to study what embodied experience is like and how our experience can be viewed in this way (Marshall 2008).

Art, and particularly painting, is identified by Merleau-Ponty as a means to express the immediate experience of being in the world. For Merleau-Ponty, 'art is most successful in giving expression to man's fundamental contact with being', as the lived-body is both the source and vehicle in manifesting our existence in the world (Chen 2016, p.310). He argues that the painter's mind does not tell the painter's mechanical body what do. Rather, painting 'is a bodily activity, one that is an expression of the lived-body's way of being in the world' (Wentworth 2004, p.15).

Inspired by Merleau-Ponty, my wayfaring-painting methodology was adopted as a foundational basis for place-making and painting as I reflected on *how might I contribute to theorising wayfaring through my art?* Artists have a unique ability to present the nonconcrete experience of the lived-body in a tangible manner. Kwok-Ying Lau (2013) develops this perspective with specific reference to phenomenological theory:

> But if to describe as faithfully as possible the world as it is seen and unfolded to us is the phenomenological philosopher's primal task, this very task can be accomplished by the painter as well, and probably in a more concrete way. For either the philosopher or the painter has first of all to be affected by the marvel or the enigma of the world; that is to say, she or he must be a being-in-the-world. But while the philosopher of the Cartesian type could readily think that she/he is a thinking subject without a body, no painter can pretend that she/he paints only with the spirit and not with the hands (p.165).

Phenomenological perspectives situate the lived body of the painter as providing a direct connection between the human existence in the world and mode of expression (Chen 2016). This relationship provides painters with the capacity to potentially give 'visible existence to what profane vision believes to be invisible', or to make the implicit realm of perception tangible (Merleau-Ponty 1993, p.127). Embodied perception transcends the visible as it brings forth an awareness of being embedded in the fabric of the world, inciting the capacity to grasp more deeply relationships with the environment and, ultimately, human existence (ibid.).

Merleau-Ponty (1993) turns to the work of Paul Cézanne to explain the complex nature of embodied perception. He points to the ways that the artist's paintings depict lived perspective through a dynamic process. Cézanne did not represent the world from a static perspective, rather he saw our binocular vision and full bodily sensations as a mode to provide a multifaceted viewpoint from which to paint (Gompertz 2012). In this way an intimate and profoundly sensuous relationship with his subject matter was enacted. For example, Cézanne's still life paintings evoked how the human body encounters objects by moving around it, tilting one's head, looking from above and below. The resulting painting may have a seemingly distorted effect (ibid.). The way Cézanne observed the world illustrates Merleau-Ponty's argument that perceptual awareness is a bodily experience encountered as we move through the world. Although Cezanne's paintings are ultimately a single visual image, they express movement and a range of complex sensations that can, in turn, be known or experienced by the viewer of the work as an embodied register.

In my research, walking becomes the equivalent to Cezanne's tilts and movements around the still life subject. The tropical climate and terrain prompt me to become slower and *receptively* engage in walking on a daily basis. This slowing of pace increased my aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment and instilled a specific kind of emplaced knowledge. Ted Toadvine (2010) describes this sensuous core

of aesthetic experience accessed by walking in the landscape in ways that strongly resonate with my own:

> [A] stroll through a stand of old-growth Douglas fir combines sights, smells, sounds, tactile impressions and the kinaesthetic sense of movement in a single aesthetic experience. This sensuous core of aesthetic experience may also be supplied by memory or imagination rather than by present perception, for example, imaginatively anticipating a walk through a forest (p.87).

As Toadvine's description suggests, it is possible to draw from direct aesthetic experience in the landscape through memory and/or imagination. As I paint, I deliberately draw from the 'sensuous core of experience', appreciating my lived body as a source of movement, experience, memory and imagination. In the words of Merleau-Ponty (1993), 'the painter takes his body with him... Indeed, we cannot imagine how a mind could paint. It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings' (p.123). With such insights, Merleau-Ponty came to crucially inform my commitment to become a wayfarer-painter.

Immersive practice enriching bodily experience

My study of phenomenology has enabled me to recognise that walking is the manner in which I *lend my body to the world*, while my body forms the basis for the creative investigations that will follow. To *immerse* means to 'involve oneself deeply in a particular activity' (New Oxford American Dictionary 2010). My robust connection with the surrounding environment had developed through immersive approaches that include mindful modes of getting lost, being dirty, tripping up and, generally, opening all my senses to the tropical environment. When I return to the studio, I consider Cézanne's idea that 'painting from nature is not copying the object, it is realising one's sensations' (cited in Andrews 1999, p.192) and that 'nature is on the inside' (cited in Merleau-Ponty 1993, p.125). I have discovered that 'realising one's sensations' through painting is indeed an effective mode of place-making. An immersive approach to landscape allows me to consciously shift from what I *think* I see to a bodily knowing of what I *actually* experience.

This notion of being present in the landscape is particularly important at a time when stylised digital images of natural environments are so readily available online. Such depictions are not helpful within a painting process that aims to achieving a genuinely embodied relationship with place. Writer Hayley Littleton (2016) asks, why climb a mountain if we can see the same view on Instagram? She quickly answers, 'because there is something about the body that matters, there's something about being there that we miss'. Through immersive art practice I aim to sideline digitally-delivered expectations or other pre-conceived notions of landscape and connect with my surroundings by directly engaging my own body and sensorium, to what are not always easy or comfortable experiences.

Immersing oneself in nature in ways that exceed one's usual comfortable routines is a well-explored method as part of creative practice. J.M.W. Turner offers a poignant historical example of an artist seeking a direct and authentic experience in nature as a basis for painting. Turner did not aspire to produce a pleasing image, stating that: 'I did not paint it to be understood, but I wished to show what such a scene was like' (cited in Andrews 1999, p.177). He famously strapped himself to the mast of the ship to feel the wrath of a storm at sea. The power, wind, water and turbulence he felt are imbued in the painting *Snow Storm* (1842), which was ridiculed at the time for looking like soapsuds and whitewash (ibid.). In time, audiences came to appreciate Turner's experiential approach for the way that it that challenged conventions of producing a 'pleasing' image of landscape.

Contemporary Australian artist, John Wolseley, also immerses himself in the environment prior to progressing to an indoor studio. Wolseley is known to wade through creek beds, rub papers against scorched trees and make prints from the borings of beetles. In a chance meeting with the artist in 2015 during my PhD research, Wolseley explained how he encourages art students to take off their shoes and squelch in the mud underfoot to really *feel* the environment as creative inspiration. Grishin (2013) notes how Wolseley's extensive journaling expresses 'a desire to be submerged within the landscape, almost like a form of mystical and spiritual bonding' (p.440). Grishin points to Wolseley's relationship with the environment where 'he need[s] to be overcome by it and enter into a private, collaborative encounter with it' (ibid). An authenticity is present in both the work of Turner and Wolseley, which I attribute to their close attention to lived experience. When I view their works, I gain a sense of their unique experience in the natural environment. Through the bodily knowledges that their work stirs in me, I am able to recognise and respond to their experiences within their chosen landscape.

Thinking in collaboration with a different painting tradition, Ingold (2010) draws from the writings of tenth century Chinese landscape painter Ching Hao to describe truthfulness in painting and its significance. Ching Hao once believed that paintings' essential feature was to make beautiful images that retained likeness to its subject. This viewpoint, however, was challenged by a concept put forward to him by a wise 'old man', who offered:

> Painting is to paint, to estimate the shapes of things and really obtain them, to estimate the beauty of things and reach it, to estimate the reality of things and grasp it. One should not take outward beauty for reality; he who does not understand this mystery, will not obtain the truth, even though his pictures may contain likeness (Ingold 2010, p.23).

Therefore, the questions of what is *truth* and what is *likeness* arise. Ching Hao concludes that, 'Likeness… can be obtained by shapes without spirit, but when truth is revealed, spirit and substance are both fully expressed' (ibid.). In this tenth century reflection, I find the timeless quality of insight that helps further my own exploration of why artists seek an authentic embodied connection to their

surrounds. Drawing from Ching Hao, I suggest that such methods aid in the production of memorable works of art from the landscape because they assist in the encapsulation of both spirit and substance, that is recognisable to others as a form of embodied knowledge, which is what I understand to be the essence of what phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty referred to as 'being in the world'.

Body-mapping informing my wayfaring-painting approach

My aim in the creative work is to evoke the immersive experience of walking in the landscape. I approach my canvas through a series of bodily and imaginative engagements in a similar way to that of navigating the terrain. Casey's (2004) concept of body-mapping helps me to articulate, and reflect on, the ways that pathways through the actual landscape become a component of art making.

There is a rich historical tradition of mapping, lines and cartography in art. For example, from medieval *mappa mundi*[14] to the contemporary usage of global positioning systems such as Simon Faithful's *Proposal for 0°00 Navigation* (2008). Artists have taken maps in countless directions over many years. The use of maps can range from explicit to obscure. In my work, the approach of body-mapping discussed by Casey has provided a specific kind of cartographic inspiration. For Casey's (2004) concept of body-mapping does not refer to traditional cartography. Rather it refers to the way artists express and orient themselves in the landscape. He writes:

> The artist's body, as a whole moving mass, displays the sense of place it paints, first in its gesticulations and then in the ensuing painted image. The gesticulations already incorporate into the body a sense of circumambient landscape. Just as the landscape is retraced in bodily motions, so these same motions leave traces on the canvas that, rather than *representing* the landscape's precise contours, *reimplace* them on the pictorial surface (italics in original, p.261).

As I move through a landscape and absorb the corporeal traces of the environment, I recognise Casey's observations in my own body. Over time, these experiences accumulate, overlapping and merging, forming a reservoir of sensuous bodily knowledge (Casey 2005). While painting, my body becomes an extension of a brush, working to render a sense or feeling of landscape. The progressive phases of body-mapping phases identified by Casey are summarised in the diagram below (Figure 34).

14 *Mappa mundi:* A famous 13th-century map of the world, now in Hereford cathedral, England. The map is round and typical of similar maps of the time in that it depicts Jerusalem at its centre (Oxford Dictionary 2017).

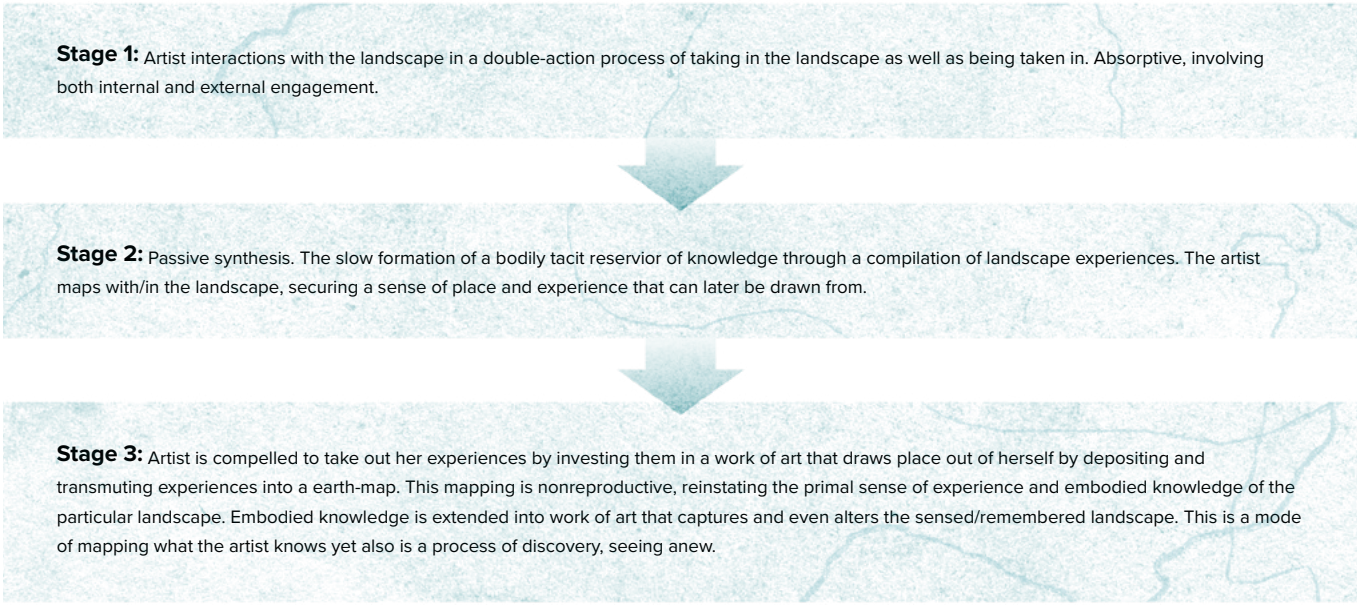

Figure 34. Progressive body-mapping phases (Casey 2005, p.169)

Casey's (2005) schema of body-mapping indicates a reservoir of bodily experience from which the painter draws. Merleau-Ponty calls this reservoir the 'customary body'. The 'customary body' is the body of deep habitual knowledge that is to be contrasted with the merely 'momentary body' that reacts to the distractions of the day (ibid.). This goes towards elucidating why mindful walking is effective as a research method, as it enables a necessary slowing down and becoming receptive. This allows me to detach myself from the busyness of everyday life, to engage with the landscape, and deepen my customary body's store of bodily knowledge.

The length of time spent in landscapes and repeated visits over time are factors in a deepening accumulation of bodily experiences. For example, witnessing many sunsets in one place, or travelling the same route during differing weather creates opportunities for recognising subtle variations and delicate nuances. Such repeated immersive experiences also create a feeling of contact, connectedness and knowledge of the environment and of wonder regarding the rich and extensive array of vistas. Psychologist Marc Wittman (*All in the Mind* 2017) concludes that the relationship between our bodies and our perception of time are inextricably linked. Wittman explains that time is subjective as it is generated through a 'bodily self' and, therefore, if we move slowly, do less and become self-aware, time seems to stretch out (ibid.). Moving slowly enables us to form stronger memories of our experiences and to generate a comprehensive reservoir of lived experience. The time-consuming process of walking at a slow pace in the tropics is conducive to the absorption of sensations experienced in the landscape in my 'bodily reservoir'.

Concepts of 'body-mapping', immersion and seemingly intimate, deep, and spiritual relationship with landscape seem to be at play in many works of art. For instance, I sense a deep knowledge of place

and the weight of time in the work of Sally Gabori, particularly as I encountered it in her exhibition *Dulka Warngiid- Land of All* (2016). This work indicates a raw physicality in painterly expression and abstraction that speaks eloquently of landscape and the tropics (Figure 35).[15]

Figure 35. Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori, Kaiadilt people, 2012, *Dibirdibi Country*, synthetic polymer paint on linen, size unknown

Bruce McLean (2012) references mapping in relation to Gabori's work describing the paintings as 'mind-mapped landscapes':

> Although these paintings appear abstract, they are highly representational maps of country- landscape paintings as true and culturally evocative to Gabori's eyes as Hans Heysen's or Eugene von Guerard's are to European eyes. Gabori's Kaiadilt family, and many of the Lardil artists, immediately saw the symbolism of her paintings, recognising the islands, inlets, points, reefs, beaches, salt flats and stone-walled fish traps that typify her country (p.478).

McLean's observations point to the manner in which a viewer's social and cultural context can shift the understanding and reading of mapped landscapes. For example, an abstracted form in a painting may hold no specific meaning to some people and yet to others may recognise an identifiable symbolic terrain in the same form. In my first-hand experience with Gabori's paintings, I found her work to embody and convey an insistent knowledge of the significance of place regardless of my lack of knowledge of the specific terrain and despite the significant cultural differences that have shaped our respective bodies and bodily orientations.

Body-mapping can include symbols associated with map making. Casey (2005) notes that some artists are quasi-cartographic as they 'feel free to borrow conventional symbols so as to put them to unconventional uses', developing their 'own private system of topographical symbols' (p.151). This is evident in Wolseley's *The colonizing of lichens in Tasmania and Valdivia* (Figure 36), which combines poetic metaphors and conventional mapping iconography such as contour lines and aerial viewpoints.

15 Gabori is from Bentinck Island located in the Gulf of Carpentaria and began painting in her 80s drawing from a rich lifetime of lived experience. Gabori did not engage with painting, and hence 'stage 3' of Casey's body-mapping outlined above, until very late in life, but had eighty years in developing the preceding stages.

The paper support has joins and creases that allude to an unfolded map with gritty surface impressions that suggest that the map has been on site and used. Although this 'map' would not adequately help in the navigation of this specific physical terrain, it implies a documented journey loaded with stories, shifting viewpoints, scientific references and a sense of time that may help us fathom the particular environment.

Figure 36. John Wolseley, 1996, *The colonizing of lichens in Tasmania and Valdivia*, watercolour on paper, 114 × 233.5cm

Artist Eve Ingalls wrote that painters have to 'fight like crazy' to discover new ways to portray landscape and explore unknown worlds (cited in Casey 2005, p.121). Such struggle is familiar. I recognise, as a practice-led researcher that the reflective and reflexive praxis undertaken, over a sustained period to time, has helped me develop a method and a personal aesthetic. As I bring walking and painting into dynamic interaction in my tropical wayfaring, I have learnt to draw upon sensory arrays through which, my embodied experience of landscape can be evoked. In this process, as a part of the wider environment of the painting, lines that are representative of physical and internalised paths have emerged as a significant motif in my body-mapping.

Taking a line for a walk

As I have outlined above, as a wayfarer forges continual route-lines through terrain, they produce a network of place, layered with sensuous knowledge, stories and time. Yet this model of route-lines and wayfaring has significance far beyond the *actual* tracks pursued by walkers and walking artists. As I will explain, in understanding this 'invisible' significance, the ideas of Ingold's lines, Casey's body-mapping and Arthur Danto's (2013) art as 'wakeful dreams' (p.48) converge.

Ingold (2007) describes that 'the [drawn] line that develops freely, and in its own time, "goes out for a walk"[16] '. This life of a line resonates with Casey's (2005) discussion of body-mapping, in which a painted line *reimplaces* the customary body's lived experience of moving through a landscape. However, Ingold takes his notion of the line further when he points to the ways that the artist's line is not only visible but generates movement and new lines in other bodies: 'And in reading it, the eyes follow the same path as did the hand drawing it' (p.73). The crucial point that Ingold makes here—and which profoundly informs my own wayfaring practice—is that a wayfaring line is active, open and potentially generative of new lines. Such a line holds the expressiveness of the gestural, rather than the static certainties of the pre-plotted. Such a line conveys the lived movement from which it is, often quite literally, drawn. The drawn/body-mapped line gives wayfaring the capacity to be shared in painting and this has led me to adopt the term wayfarer-painter.

In a manner related to ideas of active lines described by Ingold, art theorist, Arthur Danto (1981) has argued that works of art convey meanings that are often immaterial and invisible and yet symbolic. Danto (2013) wrote: 'works of art are *embodied meanings*' that are reminiscent of 'wakeful dreams' (p.37-48, italics in the original). Wakefulness conjures the artist's ability to rouse people to a vision that they may not have seen in a physical and spiritual sense. In addition, this occurs in a 'dream state' where reality is often distorted or where artist is free to create a reality (ibid. p.49). I realised that to achieve 'wakeful dream' in my works of art that I could take the various lines in my works, and the resulting shapes and patterns they create, 'out for a walk'.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, lines that 'go out for a walk' have come to hold great significance for me as an artist. The imaginative journey taken when one follows a 'walking' line may be similar to the eye following a hand drawn map, or the eye following gestures and descriptions performed during verbal directions such as, for example, *head down this road, at the big mango tree turn right, follow the ridgeline along to the low-lying sign, then zigzag down the hill trail until you meet the creek at the bottom*. In such an account, actual scale and distances become less important than what can be conveyed with a narrative of place unfolding. I find this process coming into play during my painting too, as the series of painted lines form a condensed expression of many assimilated sensuous experiences of place or a wakeful dream in Danto's words.

Expanding this idea of wakeful dreams, immersive experience, lines, movement and communication, Ingold and Lee (2006) describe life as one long conversation, or one long walk. A walked line becomes a metaphor for ones being in the world, a marker of a continuing story and relationship with the world around us. Ingold (2007) summarises:

16 Paul Klee (1960) coined taking a line for a walk; 'An active line on a walk, moving freely, without goal. A walk for walk's sake' (p. 16)

> Like the line that goes out for a walk, the path of the wayfarer wends hither and thither, and may even pause here and there before moving on. But it has no beginning or end. While on the trail the wayfarer is always somewhere, yet every 'somewhere' is on the way to somewhere else. The inhabited world is a reticulate meshwork of such trails, which is continually being woven as life goes on along them (p.83-84).

The realisation that the wayfarer's line has no beginning or end, proved to be a significant guiding principle in my approach to emplacement and creative research. I began to envisage my everyday experience of walking along with 'research walks' as being interconnected and contributing to my network or 'meshwork' of place. In Ingold's (2007) words, 'Life will not be contained, but rather threads its way through the world along the myriad lines of its relations... An ecology of life, in short, must be one of threads and traces, not of nodes and connectors... Ecology, is the study of the life of lines' (p.103). The visual allusions prompted by this description helped me to establish my wayfaring-painting aesthetic.

Figure 37. Jacqueline Scotcher, *Headspace*, 2015, synthetic polymers on canvas, 110 x 100cm

Figure 38. Jacqueline Scotcher, *Solescape* (detail), 2017, synthetic polymers on canvas, 95 x 85cm

My developing appreciation of life's ecology of lines enabled me to envisage and invoke my place and way in the world along paths of movement rather than through a relationship with a static place. The development in my concepts regarding life's ecology of lines is evident when comparing *Headspace* (Figure 37) and *Solescape* (Figure 38). In the earlier painting, a singular forged line is apparent, however in *Solescape* a series of overlaid lines creates regions shapes and connections. Other painting developments involved sanding back areas to reveal ridges of paint beneath. Through a dynamic interaction of theory and practice, and as walking and painting became intimately interconnected acts of wayfaring, I began to experience for myself what it means to take life as one long walk. This revelation is encompassed in the *Wayfaring* exhibition, the final step in this research storyline.

Phenomenological findings:

How can a review of phenomenological philosophy elucidate synergies that may arise between place, walking, body/mind and painting? This was the sub-question underpinning the literature review of this chapter. This philosophical framework allowed me to make sense of some difficult to reveal aspects of painting practice and to key to developments in my work.

I found that embodiment is essential in forming a deep understanding of place. The mind and body are connected and form the basis of my knowledge and understanding of place and that body can be viewed as a mediator between world, thought and understanding. When painting, I draw from the reservoir of lived experience and bodily knowledge and therefore, my paintings are a re-emplacement of lived experience. My artistic imaginative capacity allows me to draw from bodily knowledge and extend it into new terrains; this becomes a type of conversation between landscape/place, painting and self. To provide quality engagement through immersive bodily practices, techniques such as mindful walking, can be employed. This has proven an effective way to deepen my own understanding of the tropics and so has become a foundation for on-going creative practice. Back in the studio, taking a line for a walk during the performance of painting becomes its own form of wayfaring, extending into an imaginative space that weaves into my continuing wayfaring meshwork of lines in the world.

Stage 4: Finishing

> As my walk draws to an end, my skin feels sticky with a layer of sweat, while my weary legs lighten just a little. The trail just covered brings a sense of gratitude. A challenging climb, a trip over exposed roots, a cool creek crossing and a mountain lookout: these experiences merge to create a deep satisfaction. As I walk the last leg, I am already anticipating my next trail. The arrowheads that I follow towards the end point to yet another beginning.

Chapter Four: Wayfaring

During the course of my research, I have explored modes of place-making—in the landscape and on my canvases. This culminated in the final exhibition, *Wayfaring*, and in the articulation of my new understandings of creative practice. In this chapter I discuss painting as a mode of wayfaring and thus position my art practice as a way to participate in the world's *coming into being* as Ingold (2011) suggests.

The wayfaring-painting process

As I moved through the research, there have been many breakthroughs and findings, both large and small, which have enabled the moves traced in this exegesis from place-making to immersive body-mapping and culminated wayfaring-painting. The term wayfaring-painting indicates a fluid and uncontrived process of bringing my forth lived experience in painting, resulting in a new bodily orientation expressed on the canvas. This is a layered process that develops from walking in the landscape, which initiates the painting process, moves into uncharted imaginative territory and then illuminates future walking experience. In the process, the paintings wander and wonder, seemingly imbued with a life that not only refers to past walks but also suggests the potential of further wayfaring.

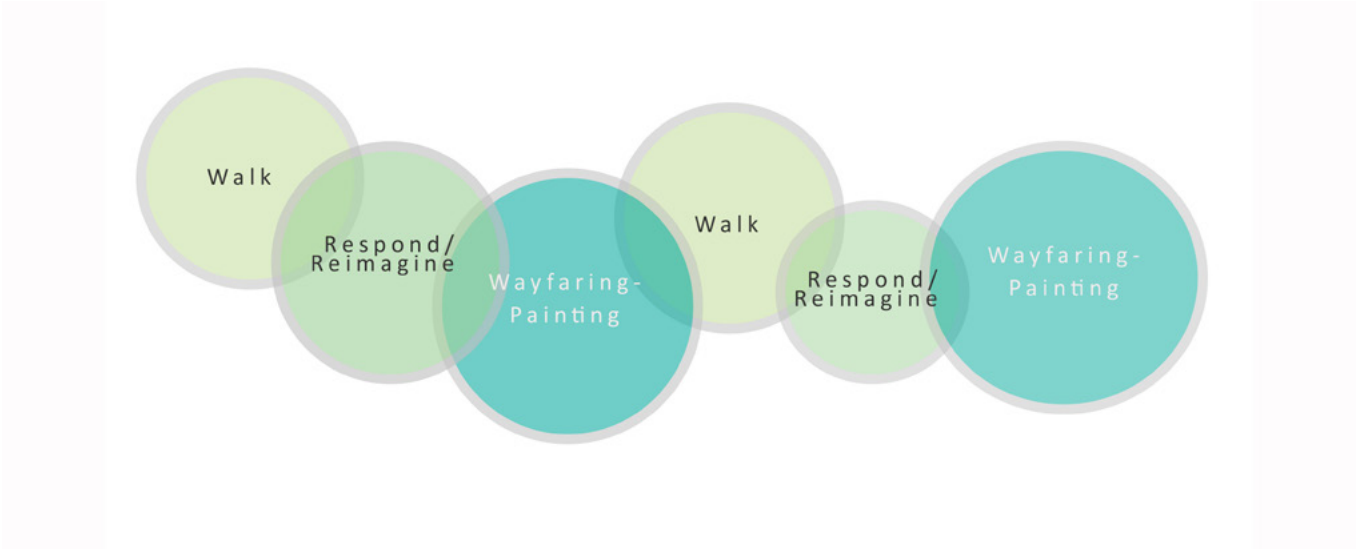

Figure 39. The wayfaring-painting process (a continuum)

The above diagram (Figure 39) represents the wayfaring-painting process commencing with walking mindfully in the local natural tropical terrain. Then, in the studio, I recall, *respond, reimagine* and translate walking experience and, subsequently, emplaced knowledge is instilled in my body through various walking flows into wayfaring-painting. The *respond/reimagine* part of the painting process is important at the beginnings of an artwork or series of work and while it can be intermediately revisited during the development of a work, fundamentally, it dissipates as the work progresses.

To start a work, I draw from my experiences and take photographs during research walks. I commence a painting by building up a texture or grit/ground on the surface with gestures that evoke the overall undulations of walking in the terrain, using wide brushes, trowels or even a broom. In the past, I considered the laying of the groundwork as part of preparation, as a base prior to the 'actual painting'. However, I now view this groundwork is an important part of the work.

I have learnt to be patient in painting and trust the process. The action of building the groundwork layers on a painting, collage or drawing must be allowed to take on a life of its own because this aesthetic quality cannot be sped up or otherwise faked. Time and material must be invested in for painted or collaged surfaces to achieve a sense of experience in the work. The process resembles a walk in that it produces unexpected experiences of unfolding possibility akin to turning a corner during a hike. At the same time, during the painting, surprising discoveries or a familiar texture can only evolve if given the opportunity through a concerted effort.

The 'responding' phase transitions into a state of *wayfaring-painting*. While I continue to draw from a reservoir of bodily knowledge, the performance of the painting becomes a new form of wayfaring on the canvas. The painting act progresses from reimagining a past walk to the sensation of breaking new ground. Through imagination and physical engagement, painting functions to manifest the spirit

or enigma of wayfaring and evoke a new bodily orientation with place. In wayfaring-painting there is a *simpatico* present between the immediate experience of being in the local natural terrain and the act of painting. My painterly movement continues on from and extends existing experience, drawing connections from wayfaring in the landscape into the unfolding of an imaginative world.

The state of wayfaring-painting is immersive and challenging. The process of 'wandering' in paint initiated new paths of painterly enquiry and extended my established base of material knowledge and colour theory. At times I could call on a specific technique to grapple with wayfaring in paint. For example, I know how to invite a slow drip like rain, wipe back to leave just a trace of a line, or how to mix colours to create contrast and harmony. And yet, at other times, I needed to take risks in order to breakthrough into new terrain and I recognise the requirement to maintain a dynamic process and not fall into an art making 'comfort zone'.

The trail indicated in Figure 39 shows how painting-wayfaring affects future walking experiences in the environment. The emplaced knowledge derived from creative practice influences how I saw and felt the landscape. In this way, my relationship with place is fused through consolidated wayfaring trails; on the ground, in imagination and through material painting play. These interwoven trails have resulted in works of art that are deeply personal and revealing, almost like a self-portraits, that speak of my sense of belonging in the tropics.

Investing time and walking away

'Inspiration is for amateurs, the rest of us just get to work' (Close cited on pbs Digital Studios 2013). This quote from artist Chuck Close has stayed with me for many years, perhaps because it is printed in bold on my studio wall as a constant reminder! But this same work ethic is evident in the day-to-day practice of many well-known artists such as Philip Wolfhagen who consistently shows up at his studio at 8 o'clock each morning, six days a week (Art Gallery of Newcastle 2013) and Aida Tomescu who notes that she *must* explore an idea to its full extent (Art Gallery of NSW 2012). This principle of applying hard work is essential to my painting-wayfaring practice. As I have also learned, I must also be willing to persistently engage with the often-uncomfortable uncertainty that comes with creative practice.

I work on several pieces simultaneously as this allows for shifts between works, interplay to develop and the practical element of allowing paint to dry whilst not breaking the flow of wayfaring-painting. Quality canvases support the weight of layers and the sanding/scratching back that I often employ to pull forward the underlying strata. Although it is important to maintain commitment to work by persisting when challenges arise, I have also learned that knowing when to walk away is vital. By this I mean stepping back from work and allowing time for reflection, to reset and then surge ahead again. I

often break up a day in the studio by going for a walk. During this time, solutions to problems can arise that take me in new directions. I attribute this to the restorative power of nature and the slow rhythm of walking, which can help to conjure creative solutions.

Quasi-cartographic and absorptive mapping

As part of my wayfaring-painting I have developed quasi-cartographic and absorptive body-mapping approaches. Quasi-cartographic map-like elements such as hatch lines, directional markers, margin coordinates and aerial views have become interwoven into the otherwise abstract aesthetic that I favour (Figure 40). This allows me to allude to the work being a map of something, but of no place in particular (Casey 2005). I use the marked trails or directional markers as symbolic of myself in the landscape, while also using them to reference time, distance, terrain and a walk-like cadence.

Figure 40. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2014-2017, *Various artwork details - examples of quasi-cartographic elements*, mixed materials, sizes variable

Throughout the course of the research, my treatment of cartographic references has transformed. For example, I began using strokes to suggest footsteps and/or undulating hills (Figure 41). These lines also make subtle reference to map hatch lines used to show elevation. In subsequent work, these lines took various forms such as minute drawn lines or negative spaces as indicated in Figures 42 and 43.

Figure 41. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Wayfaring* I (detail), synthetic polymers on canvas

Figure 42. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Land Line* (detail), mixed materials

Figure 43. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Hinchinbrook Island Walk No.3* (detail), synthetic polymers on canvas

Although cartographic references remained present throughout the development of this creative work, my body-mapping became markedly more absorptive. The term absorptive mapping describes abstractly capturing a sense or essence of a place in relation to how it is experienced or as 'a place of aesthetic action' (Casey 2005, p.140). Map-like elements of my early work began to be absorbed and integrated into the paintings and collages. Along with this refinement, I developed colour relationships across the three bodies of work produced for exhibition, which reflected both my deepening understanding of place and my progression in enacting embodied experience on the canvas.

The *Wayfaring* Exhibition: title and vision

My culminating exhibition was titled *Wayfaring* because the term encapsulated my walking methodology and my research journey more generally. It also allowed me to nod directly to Ingold whose work has so deeply influenced my wayfaring-painting practice. Gretel Ehrlich wrote 'I like to think of landscape not as a fixed place but as a path that is unwinding before my eyes, under my feet' (in Lippard 1997, p.17). My intention for the works shown in *Wayfaring* was to allude to what I had come to see as a temporal continuum; they are part of an ongoing discovery of landscape, place and self.

Taking the viewer for a walk...

The *Wayfaring* exhibition (Figure 44) differed to the two earlier staging shows because the exhibition space was selected and carefully considered, prior to making the work. In the past, I had concentrated on creating works of art without considering how they would be installed in a gallery space. However, the preliminary exhibitions and sustained engagement with the project enabled me to plan for the *Wayfaring* exhibition. I aimed to evoke an imaginative walk-like experience for the viewer through the work and the way it was arranged in the gallery. Therefore, I aimed to invite viewers to become

wayfarers in the exhibition.

Figure 44. Jacqueline Scotcher, *Wayfaring exhibition gallery views*, 2017, KickArts Contemporary Arts Cairns

As I planned the exhibition I considered *Rothko Chapel* in Houston Texas. In this extraordinary installation, Mark Rothko's large paintings are hung low to the ground in a circular formation with seating placed close, so the viewer can be absorbed in the rich colour fields. This style of hanging aims to produce a meditative experience, encouraging viewers to gaze outwards around the paintings and also inwards within themselves. The resulting effect is aptly described as 'a stillness that moves' (rothkochapel.org 2017). My goal in designing the hang for *Wayfaring* was similar. I wanted to evoke a quiet, slow and mindful experience whilst maintaining an engaging dynamic. I worked hard to produce a sense of compositional movement and now I wanted this movement to extend beyond the frame into the overall exhibition.

To this end, I selected white walled single room gallery space for its qualities of quiet containment. This allowed me to plan for absorptive engagement without distractions and to create interplay between the entire body of work. In this gallery, I could create colours that echo around the room and ridgelines that could play out in various forms, whether through brushwork or as a drawn line. I made a model of the gallery early in my process and this prompted decisions related to scale and how the installations could push a viewer's eyes and bodies around the undulating terrain suggested in the work. I considered providing a floor-path to follow, a walking soundscape and take-away postcards with colloquial directions to local walking spots; however, these ideas were variously refined, changed or abandoned as the exhibition developed.

As my research question investigates how a body of *contemporary visual art* can evoke an experience of wayfaring in tropical North Queensland, the viewer experience was an essential consideration in my project. In contemporary art practice, audience participation is considered integral and is often actively engaged and recognised as a requirement in completing the work (Art21 2017). As Lesley Duxbury (2011) writes: 'An important aspect of contemporary, innovative art is that it is an experience, usually optical or aural but often a bodily one that relies on physical interaction with a viewer' (p.36). Though I was not aiming for a level of bodily interaction of the magnitude of, for example, Carsten Holler's *Test*

Site (2006), I sought to lure the audience around the exhibition space by drawing them as embodied sensuous participants on journey through the work.

A feature of contemporary art is the dependency on the viewer to construct meaning (Graham 2005; Smith 2011; Danto 2013). Danto (1981) describes this as a 'rhetorical ellipsis', where the viewer is required to contribute to the conversation presented in the work of art by filling in what is missing. With this in mind, I planned the exhibition to conjure a poetic quality with references to specific places and themes presented in the form of allusions. For this reason, an exhibition wall statement was omitted from the opening foyer so that the viewer would enter the gallery space without a pre-determined description of what they would see, enabling them to initiate a personal journey or experience of the exhibition.

The works

Hinchinbrook Walk No.1-4

Figure 45. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Hinchinbrook Walk Series* (*Wayfaring* installation view), synthetic polymers on canvas, each 120 x 130cm

The *Hinchinbrook Walk Series* (Figure 45) emerged following a four-day hike in the Hinchinbrook Island National Park[17] located south of Cairns. The walk provided a concentrated and immersive experience of walking and camping in Far North Queensland. There was no internet or phone reception and all supplies were carried in a backpack. The four paintings that respond to the Hinchinbrook Island walk

17 Hinchinbrook Island National Park is within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The island is renowned for its range of habitats including heath, rainforest and extensive eucalypt and mangrove forests. The island is located off the coast 203km south of Cairns and is approximately 37.4km long and 10km wide (porthinchinbrook.com.au).

are individual compositions, and yet they form part of a longer story told over a passage of time.

This island research hike was the result of a longstanding desire to spend a sustained time walking and connecting with the local natural environment. Artist Hamish Fulton (2010) observes that: 'Walking (and especially wild camping) allows us the opportunity to be influenced by nature and gain an attitude of respect for all life-forms not just human life' (p.9). As anticipated, the Hinchinbrook experience was a rich engagement that epitomised elements of the Far North landscape. Removing myself from daily routines and stepping outside of my settled and comfortable life resulted in a profound wayfaring research experience. As Fulton (2010) suggested, the walk resulted in a shift in attitude. The uninterrupted time and mental space for meaningful contemplation was reimagined in the paintings that eventuated.

Figure 46. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2016, *Hinchinbrook Island research journal images*, digital photographs

My aim with these paintings was to express the sensuous essence of the hike. I wanted the painting to embody the multisensory experience and 'kinaesthetic sense of movement in a single aesthetic experience' (Toadvine 2010, p.87). I worked on journaling (Figure 46) and drew from these images as I worked on the canvases. As a result, the shifting horizon lines or views back toward the mainland play across the canvases while referencing the undulations felt during the hike. Textural elements are employed including thick dripping paint, which is a response to heavy rainfall, and green-blue oval shapes evoke a waterhole dip (Figure 47). The glossy surface in *Hinchinbrook Island Walk No.2* (Figure 48) reimagines the knee-deep water that concealed the worlds beneath, and the repeated line dashes refer to counting footsteps or dry grasses (Figure 49).

Figure 47. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Hinchinbrook Island Walk No.1*, synthetic polymers on canvas, 120 x 130cm

Figure 48. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Hinchinbrook Island Walk No.2*, synthetic polymers on canvas, 120 x 130cm

Figure 49. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Hinchinbrook Island Walk No.3*, synthetic polymers on canvas, 120 x 130cm

Figure 50. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Hinchinbrook Island Walk No.4*, synthetic polymers on canvas, 120 x 130cm

The Hinchinbrook wayfaring experience was profoundly immersive, and I found myself humbled by the dramatic natural terrain. This experience influenced my decision to employ large-scale canvas supports and to make the arrowhead markers smaller than those in previous paintings (as I use them to symbolise human presence in the landscape). As I worked on these paintings I also referred to the compositions of earlier paintings, in an attempt to extend my capacity to convey the sense of space and clarity that I had experienced when walking in this environment.

If the Hinchinbrook hike was a sustained engagement, so was the art making process. These four paintings were revisited over a time period of approximately six months, with layers being added in response to recollections emerging long after the walk was undertaken. Hinchinbrook Island offers experiences and landscapes that exemplify the tropical natural environment, and this has given shape and purpose to this project.

Solescape

Figure 51. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Solescape,* synthetic polymers on canvas, each canvas 90 x 100cm, overall installation size approx. 230 x 500cm

The *Solescape* series (Figures 51 and 52) featured on the opposite wall to the Hinchinbrook Island paintings. In this installation of meandering canvases, I sought to embody a range of pedestrian explorations within the Cairns region. *Solescape* refers to the knowledge one gains when the soles of the feet connect with the earth. To this end, paths are forged onto the painterly surface, textural grit is built up and references to the local trademark ridgelines intersect. This installation distils all that I have come to understand about landscape as a moving, multi-temporal, multi-sensory, internal and external aesthetic experience.

Figure 52. Jacqueline Scotcher, *Solescape* (*Wayfaring* installation view), 2017

I consider this installation a multi-panelled painting since each painting has its own compositional integrity, and the arrangement can differ according to the relationships I wish to emphasise. The layout of the paintings intentionally meanders and refuses a conventional and uniform installation layout. Directional elements have been created to enhance dynamic movement between canvases, and suggest what is beyond and between the frames. Rectangular canvases were selected to avoid the regularity of a grid format and then placed in a deliberately offbeat position to amble across the wall with an irregular perimeter. The large scale reflects the feeling of open space and layered textural surfaces suggest the multiple sensuous experiences that gather and reinforce a sense of emplacement.

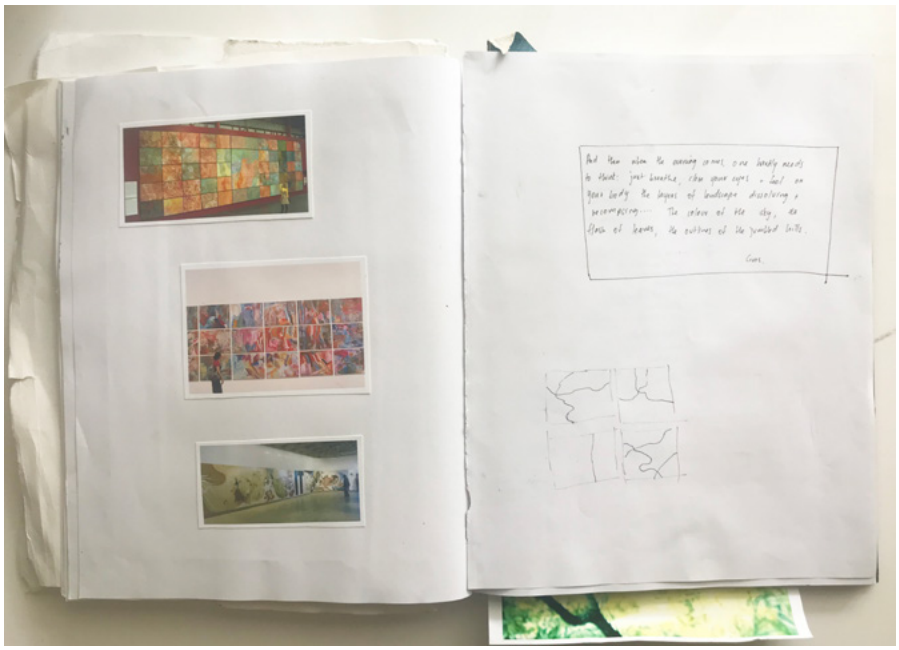

Figure 53. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2016, *image of journal page*

Brett Whiteley's *Alchemy* (1972-1973) indirectly influenced the *Solescape* series. I saw *Alchemy* at a young age and the sheer magnitude and life-to-death narrative has lingered in my memory ever since. The scale of *Alchemy* foreshadowed the large scale of *Solescape* and its aim to capture a sense of an all-encompassing journey. Another key reference in the conception of *Solescape* was the work of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, especially *My Country* (1995). The artist's sophisticated use of colour and the story of connection to place and country made me think deeply about how a sense of embodied perception, colour and movement may play cross a large composite composition. Figure 53 displays a page from initial journal planning of what was to become *Solescape*. It shows an image of these two influential works of art, a simple line sketch and quote from Gros' *Philosophy of Walking*[18] (2012). This grouping of ideas in combination with the aesthetic developed through earlier research work were formative for *Solescape*.

There were practical and physical challenges to wrangling ten canvases in the studio. Balancing an ever-changing overall composition demanded a dynamic process of responding across works. When one canvas changed colour or was moved, the whole work changed dramatically. I worked to ensure balance across the ten canvases by playing with Photoshop layouts and checking the balance of the tonal distribution of colour in grey-scale.

My wayfaring-painting brought colour, texture, shape and line (detailed in Figure 54) to the fore in *Solescape*. Some of the suggestive ridgelines and aerial views were made through the removal of paint (like footsteps that remove earth and form pathways); colour and shifting perspectives worked to convey a dynamic landscape that wanders from the physical experience into the imaginary. The artwork title itself plays with the phenomenological emphasis on the mind-body connection and the significance of direct experience in the landscape. The weight of the paint holds within it something essential about what it feels like to move through this terrain, while allowing for the interdependent relationship of imaginary and physical wandering.

18 'And then when the evening comes, one hardly needs to think: just breathe, close your eyes and feel on your body the layers of landscape dissolving and recomposing... The colour of the sky, the flash of leaves, the outlines of the jumbled hills' (Gros 2012, p.97).

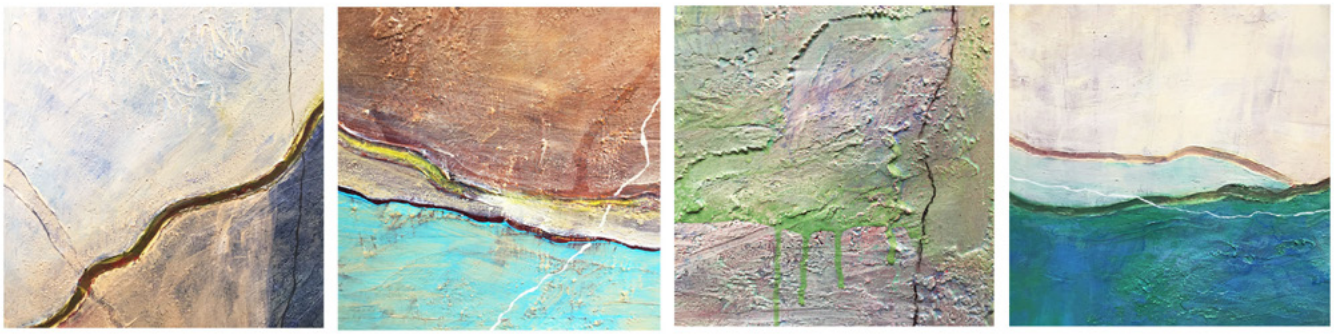

Figure 54. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Solescape* (details), synthetic polymers on canvas

Unfolding

Unfolding shown in Figures 55 and 56 was placed centrally in the gallery, stretched across the floor. The organic shaped forms where made from scrunched paintings stiffened on canvas so they are slightly raised off the ground. This folding process allows the pieces to sit up like moss growing on a surface. Alternatively, they suggest an aerial view of the landscape, or the crinkles of fallen leaves or a rocky surface. A gritty texture plays into these suggestions. Underlays of thick paint were applied purposefully to create path-like lines through brushwork. This 'understory' was exposed through rigorous sanding back, revealing peeks or glimpses of memories relating to previous journeys of mark-making and trail-finding across the 'terrain'.

Figure 55. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Unfolding*, synthetic polymers on canvas and wire, overall installation size approx. 250 x 400cm

Figure 56. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Unfolding* (details), synthetic polymers on canvas and wire

Unfolding was an extension on the earlier work *Rock Hop* (Figure 57), where paintings were collaged in organic shapes that become unified. The gallery concrete floor, which was stained with similar interesting shapes and even footprints (Figure 55) aided the direction in which I could extend the work *Rock Hop* further. This work is also a nod to Gascoigne's memorable *A Piece to Walk Around* (Figure 58). Gascoigne describes this artwork as one for walking and contemplating, and the work 'will convey some sense of the countryside that produced it' (MCA 2017). Conveying a sense of the broader local terrain and the sensation of a downward gaze was a key intention for *Unfolding*.

Figure 57. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2015, *Rock Hop*, synthetic polymers on canvas & card, sizes variable, overall size approx. 250 x 200cm

Figure 58. Rosalie Gascoigne, 1981, *A piece to walk around*, saffron thistle sticks, installed 470 × 390cm

Barnett Newman described 'sculpture as something you bump into when you back up to get a better look at a painting' (in Danto 2013, p.34). As an appreciator of large-scale modernist painting, I find this observation amusing, as I share the same bias towards wall paintings. Yet this remark is relevant for a different reason in the context of this exhibition, as I was interested in drawing viewers' attention to their feet by producing the risk of 'bumping' into the floor piece while taking in the wall works. While walking, particularly in natural terrain, much attention is directed towards the ground to ensure safe footfall. This piece encourages a downward gaze in a similar manner, directing movement around the

installation.

The word *unfold* itself suggests the experience of moving through a landscape as a corner is turned, or when a crest is overcome, and a new vista emerges. MacFarlane (2012) describes the ways in which, while walking, the landscape *unfolds* in a subtle and sometimes marvellous manner. Similarly, the concept of place revealed a shared sense that place *unfolds* (Seamon 2015). Piece by piece experiences gather and develop: a sense of place is not a defined thing but rather a continually evolving relationship that generates over time (Tuan 1977; Tilley 1994). Conceptually, this guided my decision that the work be made of multiple objects that accumulate to build the overall piece. Gradation in colour works to unify the overall form, while gesturing to a gradual change such as in a sunset over the navy-hued Coral Sea.

Moving my works of art off the wall and away from a grid format brought challenges. The organic shapes and dimensional quality meant that new construction skills had to be devised. It took several trials to find the eventual form that gives the impression as if the pieces have just fallen from above or risen up from the ground. As the work took form, the edges of each piece became increasingly integral to the challenge of achieving the overall aesthetic. An earlier version with full wire frames and hemmed edges was discarded because the effect was stiff rather than suggesting a natural fold. In the end, a balance between a robust grittiness and delicacy was achieved in ways that met the work's intention.

Figure 59. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Unfolding*, *Land Line* (*Wayfaring* installation view)

Figure 59 indicates the relationship between *Unfolding* and *Land Line*, the work featured on the back wall of the gallery. To generate indirect links, I developed relationships of colour, shape and texture to play across the two works; guiding the eye from the floor, up towards and along the wall.

Figure 60. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Land Line*, mixed materials, sizes variable, overall installation approx. 250 x 800cm

A variegated central path on the wall anchors *Land Line* (Figure 60). This line suggests a pathway through life, or the passage of time, and mirrors a mountainous ridgeline such as the one that sits ever-present on the Cairns skyline, though often cloaked in cloud. The title, *Land Line*, gestures to an invisible grounded connection between self and landscape. Extending from the line, sit layered compositions collaged from textural paintings. These suggest experience in the local landscape in a quasi-cartographic manner and include materials and mark making from actual sites that I had walked, such as leaf skeletons or charcoal dragging across burnt grass trees.

Just as Ingold and Lee (2006) suggest, life itself can be considered as one long walk, and 'the ways along which we walk are those along which we live' (p.1), I see this installation as one segment of a life-long timeline of my time spent in the tropics. I intended the pieces that form offshoots from the core path to act like pages torn from a journal or individual experiences that contribute to a continuing overarching story. Comparable to an actual bush trail, arrowhead markers are included to help direct the way. But unlike a set track or, indeed, linear conception of time, the life-long walk does not always continue moving forward; it may deviate up, down, stall or turn backwards through memory and imagination, all the while weaving a core path line which, for me, is profoundly connected with the surrounding environment.

Figure 61. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Land Line* (installation details), mixed materials, sizes variable, overall installation approx. 250 x 800cm

Land Line had been envisaged in several formats prior to this final resolution. I considered installing a dense cluster of collages in a thick band along the wall. However, in context of the whole of the exhibition there was a need for visual respite. A visit to Wolseley's *Heartlands and Headwaters* (2015) exhibition at the NGV provided a solution to my problem, that is, to have a line directly on the wall as part of the installation (Figure 62). The *Heartlands and Headwaters* exhibition also solidified my decision to reduce the amount of work and leave the collages unframed, as Wolseley's use of unframed paper conveyed a raw quality and atmosphere of a 'work in progress' that I thought shared parallels with the intent of *Land Line*.

Figure 62. John Wolseley, 2015, *Heartlands and Headwaters* Exhibition NGV, mixed materials, sizes variable

Paths

The final piece in the exhibition was *Paths* (Figure 63), a projected moving image of a drawing, which served as a contrast to the painterly surfaces. I made this piece to distil the slow meditative pace of walking in a different medium and thus contribute to the line rhythm of the entire body of work. The charcoal lines form textural pathways which overlap, interweave, fade and then reappear, a process that suggests the meshwork of bipedal experiences that constitute an embodied knowledge of place. Like memories, the lines fade yet become redrawn during the moving image cycle. The shapes formed by the intersecting pathways reference those featured in *Unfolding* (Figures 55 and 56), though the intention is that the lines may continue their meandering into the surrounding paintings through the viewer's imagination.

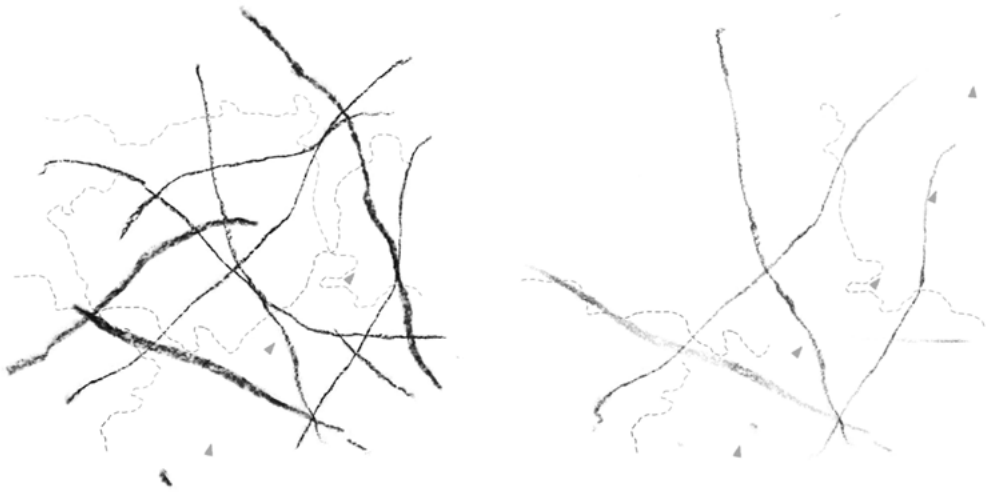

Figure 63. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Paths* (moving image stills), projected digital image, size variable

Paths was conceived during a walk after reading an Ingold (2007) chapter in which he writes:

> Wayfaring, I believe, is the most fundamental mode by which living beings both human and non-human, inhabit the earth. By habitation I do not mean taking one's place in a world that has been prepared in advance for the populations that arrive to reside there. The inhabitant is rather one who participates from within the very process of the world's continual coming into being and who, in laying a trail of life, contributes to its weave and texture (p.81).

I began to envisage place as a series of paths both in the form of physical traces and imaginary trails of thought and memory: overlapping, weaving, textured, fading and reappearing. On returning home, I sketched in charcoal a meshwork of trails, imagined a pulse-like disappearing/reappearing cycle and wrote a note 'forever continuing process from within'. In that moment I remembered the feeling of uprootedness that I experienced upon arrival in Cairns and came to understand that I had not

taken my pre-determined place in the local environment, but had rather participated in forging trails, weaving a personalised sense of emplacement and that this process has been made visible through art practice over the time.

Final methodology, reflections and discoveries

This project began with somewhat ambiguous poetic goals, which were resolved through a rigorous process of reflexive research. As Robyn Glade-Wright (2017) describes, the reflexive research process is a vigorous interaction between thoughtful analysis, artistic production, reading and writing. My phenomenological wayfaring methodology developed *through* the research process and took on various methods on route to resolving my specific wayfaring-painting approach. Through this process, works of art emerged that convey my place-making in the local landscape, illuminating the methodological-conceptual shift from travel- to pedestrianism- to wayfaring. This evolving methodology encompasses the overarching dynamic nature of practice-led research, and therefore my wayfaring-painting methodology contributes a new form of knowledge to the research field. I came to understand wayfaring itself was not a mode to arrive at knowledge, but itself the very means of knowing.

The findings during this research journey have situated and enriched my relationship with the tropical North Queensland environment. Wayfaring emphasises an active state of being attuned with place, which for me means an evolving relationship between the landscape, self and painting can be fostered. The phenomenological understandings developed during wayfaring and the subsequent sinuous exchange between immediate lived experience and painting, proved to be an effective mode to come-to-know the Far North. This extract from Larsen and Johnson (2012) accurately captures this sensation:

> [An] open sense of place is revealed in the existential attunement to wonder and compassion, a mode of being that derives from attending to the world in utter watchfulness, without thinking, while engaging in the edges of the lifeworld to reveal existence as a situated connectedness of flow, orientation and exchange (p.632).

I acknowledge that this way of being is an on-going pursuit both while walking and via material explorations, or in Merleau-Ponty's (1993) words, 'the painter lives in fascination' (p.129). My fascination and investigations into place, walking, painting and phenomenology have enabled me to reach positions regarding a range of entangled trajectories such as: the character of lines in nature, and the lines of imagination and memory that become weaved into these, and how they can be presented in paint and other media.

My walking experiences in the tropical terrain were consolidated and extended probably most profoundly though through wayfaring in paint. In this research, I position painting as a form of

wayfaring and as the embodiment of philosophy in material form. Material play is a mode in which to engage another form of wayfaring and contemplate, follow and add to the paths and texture of the world. In turn, this informs my vision and future experience of the world. Wayfaring in the studio is derived from the imaginative, yet emerges from the bodily knowledge of lived experience and movement, this is a significant dependant interplay. Lines encountered in the world are layered with paths forged in my imagination and the reservoir of bodily knowledge developed while walking. In the studio I extend this experience, involving the flow of sensuous perception and embodied knowledge, into works of art as research. This process was not simply a painterly portrayal of my own wayfaring but an integral part of it. Wayfaring in the studio became intertwined with wayfaring in the world; for me they are one and the same.

Over these past few years, during walks and painting I have contemplated Ingold's (2011) suggestion that 'the world we inhabit is never complete but continually surpassing itself' (p.13) or as Deleuze and Guattari (2004) contend, we live by ways of 'lines of becoming' (p.28). These theorists share the view that life is a phenomenon of lines and highlight that lines are not destination based, or manifestations of a point-to-point orientation but form a meshwork of continuing trails. For example, a bridge connecting two riverbanks is a transitive and fixed point-to-point connector. While the river flowing beneath is constantly on the move, flowing, in flux, interconnected, with undertows and debris (Ingold 2011). Through creative practice, I came to understand my own emplacement in terms of following the river.

Perhaps landscape painting, too often focuses on the bridge rather than attending to the subtler, yet mighty, undertow of the river. These days I seek to paint something more than a fixed unit of experience, or view imposed on the landscape. What compels me to lift my brush is a continuing pulse or trail grounded in interactions with landscape. This compulsion leads to a continuation of lived experience onto the canvas or paper. In other words, painting need not be a transit from one way of seeing to another; it need not manifest an intention and its realisation (Wollhiem 1987). Rather, for me, the stimulus to creative practice and my own efforts in 'landscape' painting, lies in the flowing river – the continuing, yet ever-changing line forged in the natural world through which I move.

Conclusion

When I walk on my local beach in the evenings, the onshore wind usually drops around 6 o'clock. At that time the tropical water is warm underfoot and the mountainous ridgeline silhouette shows itself at its best. Back in the studio, I scrape my brush slowly across the canvas, echoing the familiar ridgeline, and then wash 'steps' of blue-green with a sand-like grit. The meandering ridge and textured blue intersect, becoming layered and enmeshed within the painting. It is at times like these, both while walking and in the studio, that I feel an overwhelming sense of being-in-place. I know the rhythms of my environment and I feel a synergy with my surrounds, which are revealed in the fluid materiality of paint. This marks a significant change from my initial feeling of being disconnected from place and home in the tropical Cairns environment.

Starting with Merleau-Ponty's embodied phenomenology and concerns for attending to ways of being in the world, then building through an examination of Ingold's emphasis on life as a unfolding path of lines and sensuous entanglement, I have moved far from my original 'uprooted' metaphors of displacement. In the process, the work of writing this exegesis has enabled me to articulate the value of wayfaring-painting as a means of connecting with and understanding place, and as a method to create artefacts with embodied meaning. As Ross Gibson (2010) suggests 'there are undeniable benefits associated with the cognitive ordeal of hauling out and translating the implicit knowledge from one set of semantic and affective structures over to a linguistic set' (p.7). This process evidences 'knowing is an after-effect of understanding' (ibid., p.4) and allows my insider's perspective to be shared with others. Following the final exhibition, I found my 'wayfaring voice' through the work of writing this exegesis.

Through a research dynamic between theory and practice I have developed a wayfaring-painting method that led me to discover paths and lines as a mode of emplacement. This method produced a bodily reservoir of knowledge that, in turn, found form in my painting practice. In this way, I developed a wayfaring practice that extends Casey's body-mapping theory by specifically turning to the embodied experience of walking in the tropics as a basis by to re-envisage the landscape. I now move through the world receptive to the multisensory rhythms of the tropics and quietly consider the landscape in terms of paint in my everyday pedestrian movement.

The wayfaring-painting method and ambitions of this project have resulted in works that are necessarily deeply personal. However, it is my intention that this project makes a contribution to developing an art of the North that subtly responds to the place as it makes itself available to the senses through repeated acts of walking in nature, and in the process, it invites others to do the same. This tropical perspective offers a novel contribution to knowledge in relation to the walking-arts, as there is a lack of other artists engaged in such activities in the tropics.

This exegesis unpacks some of the complexities involved in an attentive wayfaring approach to place-making, revealing its dual outcomes in both the exhibited works of art and the written account of the philosophical thinking engaging with the creative process. For me, wayfaring has provided a meaningful structure to enmesh phenomenological philosophical knowledge with abstract representation. In other words, I have developed a way to contemplate and engage with embodied lived experience through the performance of painting; this process leads to new understandings and illuminates my ongoing interactions with the world around me.

Perhaps this wayfaring method example could be applied/adapted as a basis for other creative practice or academic investigations in various environments. By providing a precedent for a theorised Ingoldian sense of wayfaring to become materialised in a different form, my research has worked to enable embodied lived experience of wayfaring to be given new form, materiality and expression.

As I complete my own journey to become a wayfaring artist, new questions arise: What would a wayfaring poetry, dance or creative writing look like? In what ways could such mindful engagement prompt, guide and reveal alternate perspectives of place, identity and belonging? Just as I have learnt to engage with my own paths in the world and in paintings, could other diverse wayfaring stories layer in a similar manner, creating trails in a broader meshwork of collective phenomenological knowledge that perform, interact with, and so extend the lines of Ingold's theory? Or could wayfaring become a critical lens to interpret visual art about connections to place? These questions are open-ended, but I argue that wayfaring and all it encapsulates regarding self, place and belonging has increasing relevance in our contemporary lifestyles. Wayfaring involves an earned and ethical relationship to place, that does not conquer or master the environment, rather treads lightly, considers bodily presence, the power of everyday movement and beautiful significance of attending to our unfolding presence in a tangled world of relationships.

In the Far North, as one's body moves through thick humid air, the sense of touch seems to be heightened and the natural environment provides constant sensuous stimulation. My works of art sought to evoke this tropical terrain in a manner that reveals my deep and appreciative contact with this place. As I painted lines, shapes and colours, I found that the distinction between place, painting and self became blurred: self, land, sea and sky interwoven. Inside and outside also became somehow indistinguishable. As a result, I have come to recognise my paintings as self-portraits as much as landscapes.

The wayfaring-painting method and ambitions of this project have resulted in works that are necessarily deeply personal. However, I hope this project makes a contribution to developing an art of the North that does not loudly proclaim a tropical vision. Rather, it subtly responds to the place as it makes itself available to the senses through repeated acts of walking in nature. And, in the process, it

invites others to do the same.

I understand ‘place’ differently now. Wayfaring has shown me that life is lived along trails of observation and these trails are ongoing. I have come to see place not as a fixed geography but as experienced via movement and along paths, that extends both internally and externally. Even within the confined walls of a family home, movement creates traces: timber floors or carpets reveal desire lines, objects within are relocated, a particular corner may hold a meaningful reminiscence, friends have visited, and their paths linger in memory. Place is not the fixed building, but the movement around, in and through it over time. But even then, these concentrated trails meander out to the backyard, into the neighbourhood, the suburb, city and so on; they are forever connected and continuing.

As I took to walking in the tropics as a method by which to *intentionally* engage with these trails of life, I found myself a mode of emplacement. As I walked the beaches and forest trails of tropical North Queensland, I encountered paths that taught me to recognise the constitutive power of movement and lines. Looking up, I might see a vapour trail cutting the wondrous expanse of sky (Figure 64); while looking down, the layered tears in Melaleuca bark draw me in closer (Figure 67). These lines encountered in nature along the path of my walk bind me to the world.

Figure 64. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Sky trails at Palm Cove research journal image*, digital photograph

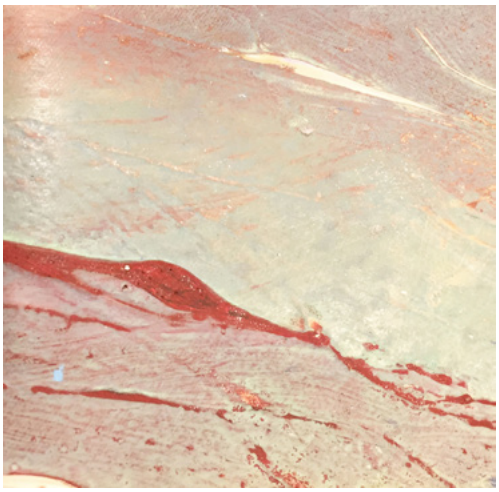

Figure 65. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Unfolding (detail)*, synthetic polymers on canvas

Figure 66. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Solescape (detail)*, synthetic polymers on canvas

Figure 67. Jacqueline Scotcher, 2017, *Melaleuca bark research journal image*, digital photograph

Wayfaring-painting has become a way for me to connect with, and make visible, the relationship between self, place, practice and the world. Of course, emplacement, like the paths and like painting practice that have made it possible, is a continuing relationship, not an explicitly achievable objective. Perhaps this is why I often include horizon lines in my compositions, to allude to this unreachable destination, and so embrace the unfolding path to the distant unknown.

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Geographical Research Scope

Jacqueline Scotcher

Interior|Exterior: Landscapes from the Far North, 2014

Exhibition invitation & gallery views
Full exhibition artwork images available at:
http://jacquelinescotcher.com/galleries/three-winters/
http://jacquelinescotcher.com/galleries/interior-exterior/


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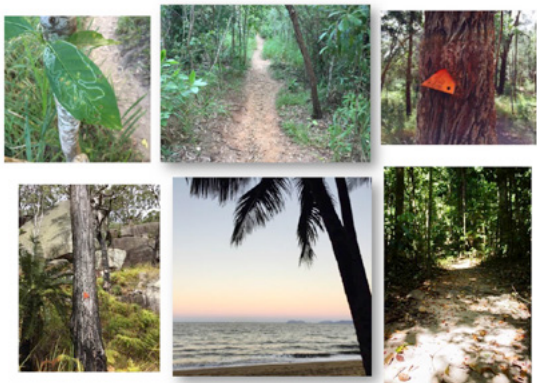
Selection of research/journal photographs 2013-2014

Jacqueline Scotcher

Trilogy, 2015

Exhibition invitation, gallery views & artwork details
Full exhibition artwork images available at: http://jacquelinescotcher.com/galleries/trilogy/

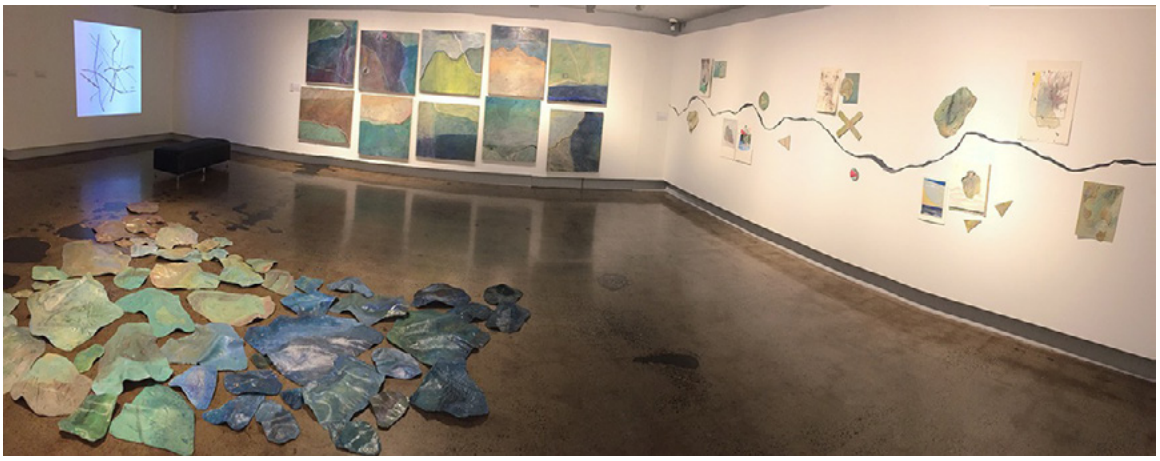
Selection of research/journal photographs 2014-2015



Jacqueline Scotcher

Wayfaring, 2017

Exhibition poster, gallery views & artwork details
Full exhibition artwork images available at: http://jacquelinescotcher.com/galleries/wayfaring/

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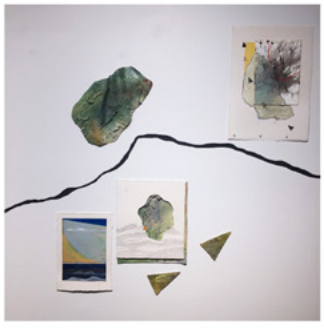
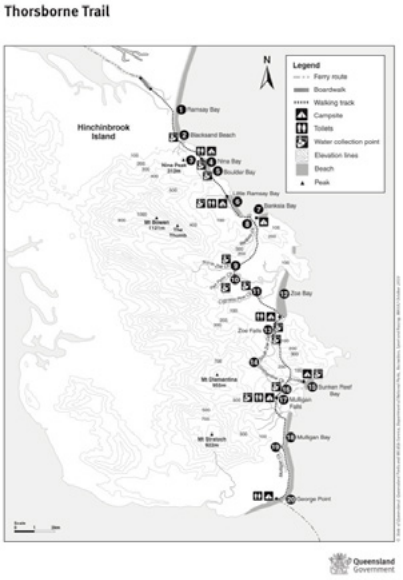


Selection of research/journal photographs 2016-2017

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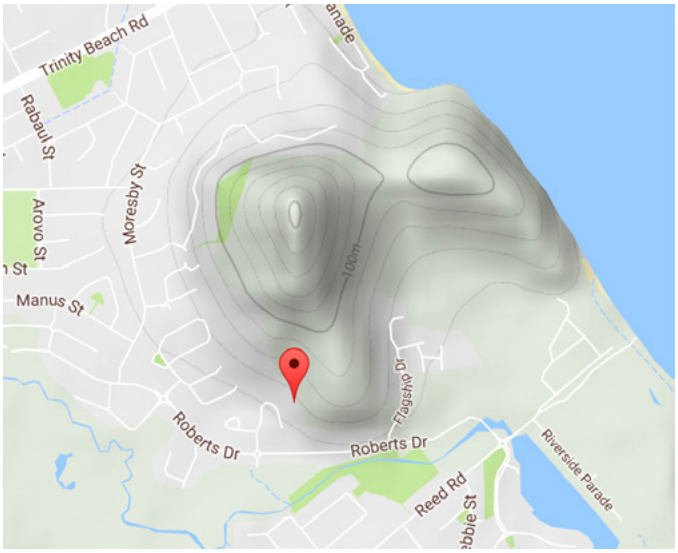
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Moresby St
Arovo St
Manus St
100m
Flagship Dr
Roberts Dr
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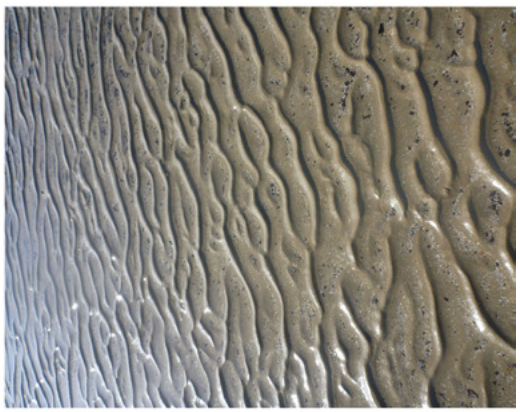
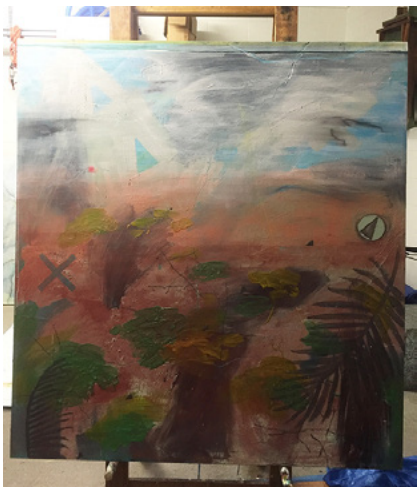
Reed Rd
Riverside Parade



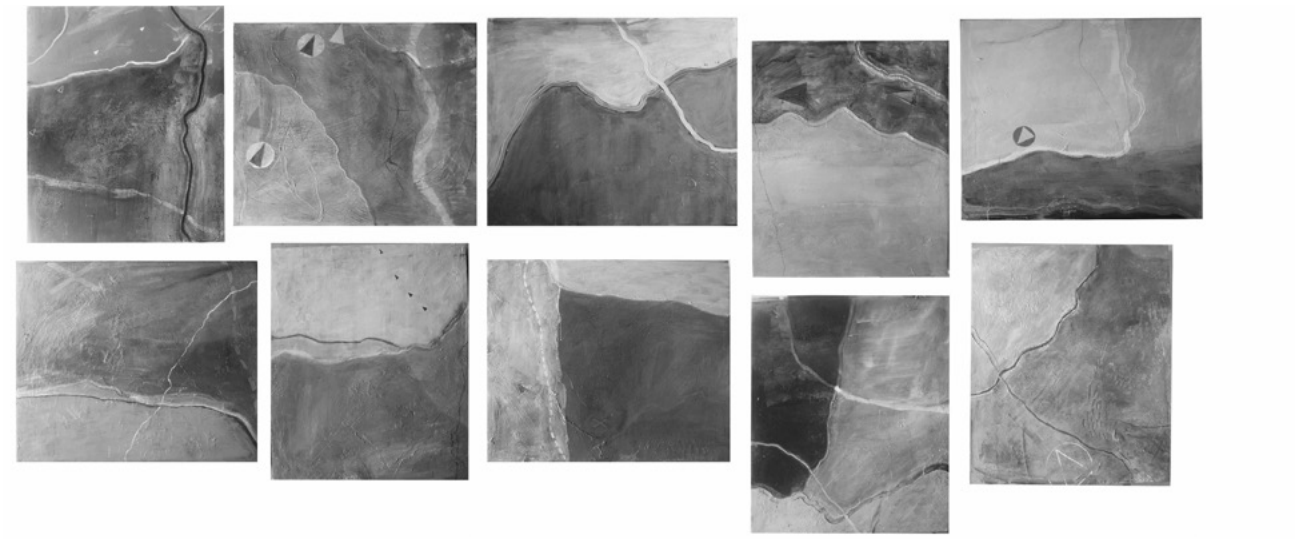
Studio Progress Images

Unfolding



Hinchinbrook Island Walk No.2

Solescape



Solescape - Testing tonal variation

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Wayfaring and Creative Practice in Tropical Far North Queensland Landscapes

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Abstract

Walking and the tropical Far North Queensland landscape of Australia have had a major influence on the author's creative research. In this paper, immersive practice, which includes walking, is examined as a means to form connections with the natural environment and stimulate imaginative thought. These attributes have developed the author's painting processes, which endeavour to enrich understandings of the landscapes of tropical far north Queensland. An immersive approach responds to the complexities of increasingly sedentary lifestyles and the tendency to engage with digital distractions in our high speed media-connected world. In this fast-paced realm, meaningful relationships with the natural environment can be reduced, with meandering and imaginative pursuits often becoming neglected. Living in Far North Queensland provides easy access to unique tropical landscapes to engage with. Walking receptively in such natural environments can provide a physical and mental counterpoint to contemporary fast-paced lifestyles. Furthermore, walking provides opportunities to engage in 'mind-wandering' and embodied experience that can enrich painting practice.

The research presented in this paper celebrates life in tropical Far North Queensland and highlights the artist's experience in this particular part of the world. Recently, the 29th of June was designated the International Day of the Tropics by the UN General Assembly, a day founded to raise awareness and consideration of both the challenges and opportunities faced by tropical regions of the world. (stateofthetropics.org). This designated day provides space for the author/artist to reflect upon the diverse culture and ecosystems of the region and position her artistic practice within a broader context of ideas relating to tropical environments.

Keywords: wayfaring, painting, immersive contemplative practice, tropical Australia

Introduction

This paper explores the significance of pedestrian movement in tropical Far North Queensland (FNQ) Australia, and how these experiences are interpreted in the form of painting. Tropical environments of various regions of the world and/or walking have been